

BETTY GORDON

on the

CAMPUS



ALICE B. EMERSON

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"Betty Gordon On 'The Campus'"

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A SLIPPING, A NOISE OF
FALLING TRUNKS.

Page 116

Betty Gordon on the Campus

OR

The Secret of the Trunk Room

BY

ALICE B. EMERSON

AUTHOR OF "BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM," "BETTY
GORDON AND THE LOST PEARLS," "THE RUTH
FIELDING SERIES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK
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Books for Girls

By ALICE B. EMERSON

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BETTY GORDON ON THE CAMPUS

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BETTY GORDON ON THE CAMPUS

CHAPTER I

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

BETTY GORDON looked out of the window of a fast-moving train bound for Washington.

"Good-bye, Orchard Cove!" she breathed, softly, and her brown eyes were a little misty as they dwelt upon the wild and rugged beauty of the little summer resort which was swiftly slipping from view behind the purple haze of the distant hills.

"What a difference, going back to Washington!" she exclaimed, turning to Bob Henderson who sat by her side. "It's like jumping suddenly into another world, isn't it, Bob?"

"I'd say!" exclaimed the boy. Then his fine, lean face crinkled humorously. "We jump into a school world without a Mrs. Pryde Calott!"

"Oh, my eye!" exclaimed Teddy Tucker, who sat directly in front. "Don't mention that woman or I shall commit murder."

"And I might be your accomplice," suggested his twin, with relish.

"Oh, you'll have enough to do, Tommy Tucker, when we get to Shadyside and Salsette to hold your own with Miss Prettyman," gibed Bobby Littell, a girl who sat across the aisle.

A shout of laughter went up at Tommy's expense.

"Here comes the conductor. Get out your tickets!" exclaimed Norma Guerin.

There was a scramble for tickets among the crowd of young people as the conductor came smiling down the aisle.

"You're starting back to school after a summer at the shore, eh?" questioned the man, as he punched their tickets. "You're a fine-looking lot and no mistake. Well! Well! You can't be young but once."

In truth they were "a fine-looking lot," these young people who had been spending their vacation at Orchard Cove, a summer resort on the Atlantic coast.

With the ushering in of the warm September days came the call of school and the young people were hastening back to Washington and on to Fairfields, across the beautiful Potomac, where the hospitable Littells had invited the others to their lovely home for a week before the term at Shadyside School and Salsette Military Academy

would begin. Timothy Derby and the two Tuckers would be of the party, as the parents of these boys would be away from Washington for a month longer.

"School days, school days,
Dear old golden rule days,"

hummed Timothy Derby, pushing his shell spectacles more firmly upon his nose and opening a new book of poems.

Libbie Littell, who sat by his side, threw him a look of deep admiration. It said more plainly than words, "Behold, the poet of the rising generation!"

A good-natured, bantering laugh arose from the group of young people who did not take Timothy's poetic aspirations as seriously as Libbie did.

The sweet face of Alice Guerin sobered suddenly. She leaned over and poked Betty Gordon in the back.

"Betty, remember our last trip on the train—that awful wreck?" she whispered.

"Remember? How could I forget? But I remember Mrs. Calott more! I hope I never see that woman again! I'd rather have forty black cats cross my path daily!"

Bob Henderson smiled at Betty's vehemence and turned to look at her.

She was a goodly sight to see when warm, indignant color stained her cheeks and the light of battle was in her brown eyes.

"Betty, you get prettier every day!" he exclaimed impulsively.

"Oh, thank you!" returned the young girl, coloring with pleasure.

Bob's compliments were rare and meant much when given.

"You look so well in spite of your worry over Mrs. Calott and the lost pearls," murmured the soft-voiced Alice Guerin.

"Betty's going in for athletics this year," announced Norma Guerin sturdily, "and, believe me, she'll be a credit to old Shadyside."

"Hurrah for our Betsey!" applauded Bob. "I'm glad to hear it. I'll make the football team this year or know the reason why!" he added.

"Oh, Bob!" exclaimed Betty eagerly. "I hope you do! I'm sure you will!"

Just then a deep groan sounded through the car and the young people looked curiously around to locate the sound.

"It's that man sitting across the aisle in front of Bobby Littell and Tommy Tucker," whispered Bob in Betty's ear.

Betty looked in the direction indicated.

A tall, thin man was nervously running his fingers through a mass of shaggy, black hair.

As Betty observed him curiously, the man gave another groan and buried his face in his hands. He seemed entirely oblivious of his surroundings.

"Poor duffer! Must be ill or in trouble," murmured Bob.

Betty studied the man's downcast face.

"He looks more worried than ill," she observed in a whisper.

Bob nodded understandingly.

"You know I can sympathize," said the girl in a low voice. "I worried more about Mrs. Calott and those lost pearls than any of you realized. I was afraid Uncle Dick would have to make the thirty thousand dollars good, and that thought almost turned me gray over night."

Betty Gordon's adventures with Mrs. Calott are related in "Betty Gordon and the Lost Pearls." The young girl's reference to the circumstantial evidence that seemed to implicate her, drew a look of commiseration from Bob. His fine young face hardened and grew stern.

"You were in a tight place, Betty," he remarked.

"Well, it's all over, thank goodness," sighed Betty. "When I get to Shadyside, Ada Nansen will not be quite such an enemy as Mrs. Pryde Calott."

"It is a wonder the restless and fastidious Ada could be satisfied with three consecutive years in

the same school," observed Bob Henderson.

"I suppose her parents have something to say about that," and Betty removed her hat and ran her fingers thoughtfully through her dark hair.

"That's a mighty good-looking suit you have on," observed the boy. "New, isn't it? It is—how do you girls express it—smart looking?"

"Madame, our French teacher, would say chic," replied Betty, smiling, as she looked down at the dark suit relieved only by a tie and hat of red. "I hope Uncle Dick will like it. I bought it in one of the shops at Orchard Cove yesterday."

"Gee, I hope nothing will happen to prevent him meeting us at Washington!" exclaimed the boy.

Richard Gordon, Betty Gordon's only living relative and the guardian of Bob Henderson, was a promoter of various business and financial enterprises which compelled him to travel much of his time and which made any of his arrangements with the young people a trifle uncertain.

How Betty Gordon had fallen in with Bob Henderson is related in the first volume of this series, entitled, "Betty Gordon at Bramble Farm." Betty, then quite a young girl, was left to the care of her uncle who, not knowing what else to do while he was away on a business trip, had sent her to the farm where Bob was a bound boy. The young folks had a hard time of it on

the farm until Doctor Guerin, a country physician, and his wife came to their assistance.

After that Betty went to Washington, there to fall in by mistake with the Littell girls. Later Betty went to Shadyside boarding school with the older Littell girls, and there Norma and Alice Guerin joined her.

In the meantime the matter of Bob Henderson's parentage had been taken up, and it was found that the youth had some relatives in the West and also some money coming to him. Mr. Gordon became the lad's guardian, and Bob was sent to Salsette Military Academy, located across the lake from Shadyside school. Here Bob had a host of friends, including Timothy Derby and the Tucker twins.

Terms at school were broken up by summer vacations at a mountain camp, at Ocean Park, at Rainbow Ranch, and in Mexican wilds, where Betty and Bob were held for ransom. Then, as related in the volume preceding this, called "Betty Gordon and the Lost Pearls," had come the outing at Orchard Cove, where Betty was accused of theft.

But all that was a thing of the past, and now Betty and Bob and their chums were leaving the summer outing behind to get ready to return to Shadyside and Salsette.

"Betty!" called Bobby Littell from across the

aisle of the car, "where is that big box of chocolates your uncle Dick sent to you when he left for Washington? What do you mean by keeping them all to yourself?"

"Who said chocolates?" demanded Tommy Tucker eagerly.

"I said chocolates," Bobby announced firmly.

"Oh, where, oh, where
Did the chocolates go?
Oh, where, oh, where
Did they go?"

sang Timothy Derby, and the crowd of young people took up the chant, their voices teasing but insistent.

"Mercy, what a clatter! Bob, where did that box go? Find it quick before the conductor comes in to quiet them."

Bob arose slowly and smiled down upon the eager upturned faces of his friends and schoolmates.

"My kingdom for a chocolate, old man!" sang out Tommy Tucker.

"Hurry!" giggled Norma Guerin. "I am dying of chocolatitis."

Bob took a five pound box of candy down from the hat rack and with a flourish deposited it in Betty's lap.

"Oh, what beauties!" exclaimed Betty, as she lifted the lid. "Uncle Dick's a dear!"

"Chocolates! Chocolates! We must have chocolates!" clamored the young people, much to the amusement of the other passengers.

The box went the rounds, including the other passengers who sat near by. But when it was offered to the strange-looking man who had groaned, he shook his head and lifted eyes of such haunting misery that Betty's tender heart was touched with pity.

On rushed the train. Wild and natural beauty was giving way to the clang and clamor of cities.

Presently a brakeman rushed through the car. "Next stop Washington! All out for Washington!" he sang.

Betty and her school chums, fortified by the chocolates, were in jubilant spirits. A mad but good-natured scramble for wraps and hand baggage began.

"Where's my book of poems?" demanded Timothy Derby suspiciously. "Who dared take it?"

"No! No! I'm carrying it, so you can manage our traveling bags," explained Libbie.

A laugh went up at Timothy's expense. He grinned sheepishly.

The train was now approaching the Union

Station, and, with baggage in hand, the young people crowded out into the aisle.

"I hope father can get off to meet us with the car," remarked Bobby Littell to Betty, "or I'll have to get a taxi to carry the crowd," and her eyes softened with real affection as she glanced back at the friends who were to spend the week with her at Fairfields.

"Perhaps Uncle Dick will be the one who will not put in an appearance, and I shall be the one to hunt a taxi," laughed Betty.

The two girls walked down the aisle together, following the strange man whose queer actions had attracted Betty's attention earlier in the afternoon.

"I wonder who he is?" she whispered to Bobby Littell. "He has acted so strangely."

"Yes, I noticed it," returned her friend.

Tommy Tucker, directly behind them, overheard the conversation.

"Acts nutty to me," he observed in a low voice.

Just at that moment the strange man, who was struggling under the weight of a lot of baggage, dropped something to the floor of the car.

Betty stooped to recover the article and saw that it was a notebook.

"I beg your pardon," she began, touching the

strange man's sleeve, "but doesn't this belong to you?"

He turned and fixed a pair of troubled, dark eyes upon Betty's face. As they traveled down to the notebook a startled exclamation escaped him.

"Yes, indeed!" he cried. "I can't afford to lose that."

And, to Betty's surprise, he clutched at the notebook as if it were a million dollars.

"I've lost enough!" he exclaimed. "I've lost enough without losing this!"

He went down the aisle shaking his head and muttering to himself.

Betty looked at Bobby in astonishment.

"What did I tell you?" murmured Tommy Tucker. "The old boy's nutty."

Richard Gordon, distinguished-looking in any crowd, was at the gates waiting for them as the young people trooped from the train.

Betty experienced a thrill of pride as her eyes rested on his tall, familiar figure topped by a mass of shining gray hair.

"Mr. Littell couldn't come," he explained to the chattering young people after he had kissed Betty and shaken hands with Bob. "Carter is here with your car, Miss Bobby, to bring your extra company."

After much laughter, directions and good-natured raillery, they were off.

Betty sat with Norma and Alice Guerin on the back seat of her uncle's car with Bob and Mr. Gordon in front.

The Littell car, filled to overflowing, followed close behind with the gray-haired Carter at the wheel.

"All set for Fairfields!" cried Norma, with sparkling eyes.

The young people were in gay spirits. But Betty could not get the strange man off her mind. She looked curiously around, but he was nowhere in sight.

"I wonder who that queer man could be," she pondered, "and what was worrying him."

Little did Betty Gordon dream just then that she was to meet this man again and under most extraordinary circumstances.

CHAPTER II

AT FAIRFIELDS

"WELCOME to Fairfields!" exclaimed Mrs. Littell, smiling cordially as the two cars sped up the sweeping drive which led to the beautiful old colonial mansion.

The fine old home was a fitting background for the woman who waited on the beautiful grounds, to receive the young people so graciously.

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Bobby, tumbling out of the limousine. "We're all here! Every one of them could come. Welcome your prodigal daughters first, then the rabble!"

And Bobby, Louise and their cousin, Libbie, all of whom had just spent the week-end at Orchard Cove with Betty Gordon, fell upon Mrs. Littell with such "bear hugs" that she gasped a laughing remonstrance.

"My dears! My dears! You get stronger every day. And here is Betty! You dear girl, how well you look!"

Mrs. Littell greeted each of the young people in turn as they crowded round. With a few gracious words she put the Guerin girls entirely at

ease. It was Alice and Norma's first visit at Fairfields where the rest of "the crowd" had spent many a happy day.

"And here is Bob!" Mrs. Littell exclaimed warmly, shaking hands, "and Tommy, Teddy and Timothy—the three T's! All ready for school, I dare say!"

"As lambs led to the slaughter," mourned Tommy, striking a pathetic attitude.

Mrs. Littell smiled affectionately at the dark Tucker twin and made her way over to the car to greet Richard Gordon who was having a few parting words with Betty and Bob.

It was impossible for Betty's busy uncle to remain at Fairfields, but he had promised Betty and Bob that on "the fateful Thursday," as Tommy Tucker expressed it, which marked the fall opening of both schools, he would accompany them to Shadyside before his departure for an extended trip through the West.

"Come, Bettykins!" called Bobby Littell, and Betty lifted her face to her uncle's to be kissed.

Mr. Gordon shook hands gravely with Bob and whispered a few words of admonition in the boy's ear as the other young people trooped gayly toward the house.

"I know mother wants to talk to your uncle," whispered Bobby, "and hear all about our adventures with Mrs. Calott at Orchard Cove."

At that moment a young girl came running down one of the terraced walks to meet them. A fine collie romped at her heels.

"Why, it's Esther!" gasped Betty. "How she has grown this last year!"

"Yes, our little sister is growing up," acknowledged Bobby.

Esther Littell flushed with pleasure as she held out a welcoming hand to Betty. "I am going to Shadyside with you this year!" she announced triumphantly.

Betty kissed her with real affection. "I am so glad," she returned. "I shall never forget my first year at Shadyside, and how strange I felt at first. But you know so many of us that you won't feel very strange."

A shadow passed over the younger girl's face.

"It will be great fun, but I shall have to room with a strange girl, for you girls made your arrangements for rooms at the end of last term."

"Oh, what's the dif!" exclaimed Bobby carelessly. "Let's hurry! The crowd's on the porch ahead of us."

The chattering young people entered the wide hall and two smiling, white-capped maids piloted them up the beautiful, carved staircase to their different rooms.

"One time we were here," confided Betty to Alice Guerin, "Mr. Littell caught Tommy

Tucker sliding down these banisters." Betty giggled softly at the remembrance.

Alice smiled. "What did Mr. Littell say?" she inquired.

Betty laughed. "He said, 'Racket while you may, for schoolroom discipline is coming.' He's a dear, Alice. You'll love him."

To the delight of the young people, they were given their old rooms—the boys on the third floor in three connecting rooms and the girls on the second.

"Oh," confided Esther Littell to Betty and the two Guerin girls, "I know we shall have such larks! I've always wanted to go to Shadyside. Bobby, Louise and Libbie have talked about the midnight suppers and all the thrilling things that happen until I'm simply wild to go there, too!"

Betty smiled at the younger girl's enthusiasm, remembering her own freshman year and her dreams of happy anticipation.

"Oh, Betty!" exclaimed Bobby carelessly, poking her head in at the bedroom door, "I forgot to tell you that mother's flinging a little party for us to-night—a dance—so make yourselves at home and put on your best bib and tucker." With a nonchalant wave of the hand she was gone.

The girls looked at one another in such surprise and consternation that Esther exclaimed quickly:

"I don't believe you knew a thing about it until

this very minute! Mother wrote to Bobby of her plans, but I'll bet Bobby forgot all about it in five minutes after she read it. If she isn't the limit!"

"She certainly is!" agreed Louise Littell, with sisterly frankness, "for I didn't know it myself. Come on, Esther. We must give the girls a chance to bathe and don their evening clothes if there's a party on. I'll send a maid to press your dresses."

Left alone, the three visiting girls faced each other with laughter in their eyes.

"It's lucky each of us put an evening dress in her week-end bag!" exclaimed Norma.

Betty and Alice nodded, too full of mirth for speech.

Mr. and Mrs. Littell possessed to a remarkable degree the knack of making each guest enjoy himself. And it was a happy-faced crowd of young people who gathered around the long dining table.

"It is so nice to see you again!" exclaimed their host warmly, as he looked at the smiling faces of his young guests and noted the pretty evening frocks of the girls.

Betty had donned a pale yellow dress with trimming of deepest orange and she was looking her best.

"I like that dress," whispered Bob Henderson

when the soup plates were removed. He sat at her right. "You look like a million dollars in it!"

"You're not so bad to look at yourself," admitted Betty, flashing him a mischievous look.

"That reminds me," said Bob in a low voice, "that I must go into Washington to buy some necessary togs before I go back to Salsette. Promise me you'll go with me. We can make a day of it and lunch in town."

Betty's brown eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"That would be great fun! If I can manage at all to arrange it, I certainly will."

At eight the other young people began to arrive. Only six other couples were invited. A small local orchestra furnished music.

"It seems a long time since Frances Martin taught you to dance. You have become an expert since," commented Betty as Bob guided her skillfully over the polished floors.

"It hasn't been long enough. Is Frances coming back to Shadyside this year?"

"Yes, she's crazy about the school. All our old crowd will be there, I guess."

At this moment, one of the strange young men who had been introduced to the crowd cut in and Bob was forced somewhat reluctantly to turn Betty over to him.

Promptly at twelve the last car disappeared

down the beautiful driveway of Fairfields. The party had been what Bobby rather inelegantly called "a howling success."

Happy days followed in swift succession. River trips and theater parties were planned for the young people, and it was not until Wednesday of the following week that Betty was able to fulfill her promise to Bob and plan a shopping trip in Washington.

It was a lovely day. It seemed to Betty that the Potomac River never looked bluer or Washington more beautiful than on that balmy September day.

It was fun to help Bob choose handkerchiefs, socks and sweaters; to stroll down the crowded streets and peer in the lovely shop windows; to take their turn in a long line of waiting people within a white-walled cafeteria; to choose from the many tempting dishes as they slid their trays along the projecting rods which separated them from the white-robed cafeteria waiters.

It was fun to stroll aimlessly down Pennsylvania Avenue with Bob at her side; to watch the faces of the passers-by.

As they approached a prosperous-looking office building, Betty observed two men in a side doorway who were evidently quarreling.

A tall melancholy man turned a flushed face in

her direction and Betty gave a startled exclamation.

"Look, Bob!"

"It's that strange man we saw on the train!" whispered Bob. "The fellow who groaned so!"

"The other is Ada Nansen's father!" returned Betty in surprise.

"Ada Nansen's father!" cried Bob. "Where did you know Mr. Nansen? Are you sure?"

"Of course I am—didn't I meet him at the school?" returned the girl. "I wonder what that strange man can have to do with him."

"Wait a minute—perhaps we'll find out," answered the boy.

Suddenly the tall man exclaimed angrily:

"I'll get even with you for this if it takes a lifetime! Just wait until I get my evidence and I'll put you in the penitentiary for this!"

"You'll never get it," returned Mr. Nansen quietly and coolly, "because it doesn't exist."

"It does—some day I'll find it!" threatened the other, and shook a clenched fist in his companion's face.

With an imperturbable smile more cutting than words, the older man stepped back into an office and closed the door in his companion's face.

Choking with anger and uttering threats that Bob and Betty could not understand, the tall man went muttering down the street ahead of them.

"That other man was surely Ada Nansen's father!" exclaimed Betty thoughtfully. "I wonder what they were quarreling about!"

"Hard telling, if Mr. Nansen is anything like Ada."

Ada Nansen was the leader of a group of Shadyside students who had been nicknamed "the rebels" because they were impatient of authority. They had made school life very troublesome for Betty Gordon.

Betty was thinking of all these things and said wistfully:

"I hope Ada will act better this term. Goodness knows, I want to avoid trouble!

"Wonder what Mr. Nansen's doing in Washington, anyhow," went on Betty, after a short silence.

"Oh, he probably has business here often enough."

That night Betty slept fitfully and dreamed terrifying dreams in which Ada Nansen and the strange-looking man had a prominent part.

"Oh, my!" she whispered, turning over a hot pillow, "I wonder if this is a forecast of trouble to come. I hope not."

CHAPTER III

BACK TO SHADYSIDE

THE "fateful Thursday," as Tommy Tucker was wont to express it, came all too quickly. Soon after breakfast, the Littell cars, filled to overflowing, carried the chattering young people to the station.

It was a merry crowd that boarded the 9:36 local for Shadyside School and Salsette Military Academy.

"Oh, isn't this fun!" exclaimed Esther Littell to Betty Gordon. "Aren't the boys handsome in their uniforms?"

Bob Henderson, the Tucker twins and Timothy Derby wore the blue and silver uniforms of the Salsette cadets.

"Indeed, yes. I never shall forget how thrilled I was two years ago when first I saw all their grandeur!" and Betty threw Bob Henderson an impish look as she made room for her beloved Uncle Dick to sit by her side.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

Betty glanced curiously around the car. It was almost filled with young people who evidently were schoolward bound.

The gay chatter of the friends burst forth as they settled themselves in their seats. Many curious and envious glances were cast in their direction.

"Well, I must say they act as if they owned the car!" exclaimed a clear, protesting voice from across the aisle.

Betty turned quickly to see who had spoken.

The speaker was a striking little brunette, dark of hair and eye, with rich, natural coloring. A wholesome air of health was offset by a disdainful uptilted nose and a sneering curve to the full red lips. Her entire personality radiated energy and determination. Betty instantly realized that in Tommy Tucker's vernacular she was a "go-getter."

"Wonder who she is and if she's going to Shadyside," thought Betty. "She's a little too strikingly dressed for good taste."

Not a whit abashed by this public "calling down," Betty and Bob's friends continued to chatter.

Esther Littell, sitting directly behind Betty and Mr. Richard Gordon, had made the acquaintance of a modest-looking and plainly dressed girl who shared the same seat with her.

Esther now leaned forward and poked Betty in the back.

"Betty, Betty!" she cried eagerly. "I want you

to meet my new friend. She's a freshie too! Miss Gordon, Miss Anne Warner. Miss Warner, allow me to present Betty's uncle, Mr. Richard Gordon."

"Isn't it lovely," she chattered when the smiling acknowledgments were over, "that I know one person at least who will enter the freshman class with me?"

"I am glad, too," rejoined Anne Warner shyly. "I am quite alone. I do not know any one."

"Why, how strange and lonely she must feel!" thought Betty, and her heart went out to the younger girl.

"We will take you in charge," she promised warmly. "It is Esther's first year, too, so hang together and we'll take you the necessary rounds."

"Oh, thank you!" Anne Warner exclaimed warmly, and flashed Betty a grateful look. "That will be so kind of you."

"Have you made arrangements in advance for a room?"

"No, I haven't."

Esther gave a shrill little screech. "I haven't either! I haven't either! Why couldn't we be roommates?"

A look of relief and pleasure swept over Anne Warner's plain face.

"Why—why, if you would care to, that would be lovely!"

"It is settled! I have a roommate!" exclaimed Esther happily, sinking back in the seat.

"You see," she cried with a flourish of her hands, "it is their third year and they made arrangements for rooms at the end of last term. But I prevailed on mother just at the last moment to let me come, so I have made no plans. I am lucky to get you," she cried warmly.

Anne Warner's rather sad face flushed with embarrassment and pleasure.

"I wish Esther was not so impulsive!" thought Betty uneasily, as she turned back to her Uncle Dick. "After all, we know nothing whatever of this Anne Warner. Perhaps Esther should have waited and trusted to the judgment of Mrs. Eustice to provide her a roommate."

Presently the boys began to sing and give their football yells to the evident enjoyment of the train crew.

Not to be outdone by the Salsette cadets, the girls began to sing songs of Shadyside and Betty found herself joining in the refrain. Her voice was a rich contralto.

"Shadyside! You are the best!
Shadyside! You lead the rest!
You're our beacon and our pride,
Shadyside! Shadyside!"

As Betty sang she was conscious of a pair of keen, dark eyes upon her. The eyes belonged to a square-faced German-looking woman around whom clung a certain unmistakable atmosphere of distinction and culture whom, sitting at a distance, the girl had not before noticed.

"I wonder who that woman is," whispered Betty to her uncle. "She keeps looking at me. Have I a soot spot on my nose or is anything wrong with me?"

Richard Gordon gave Betty a keen look, but seeing she was really in earnest, he smiled his whimsical smile and said what, to her, was a strange thing.

"Betty, you are quite unspoiled. I am glad. There is no soot spot on your little nose."

"Thank you for the word 'little,'" laughed Betty, wrinkling the before-mentioned member. "I feel flattered! For that I will get you a drink. I am, myself, thirsty."

At the water cooler she was joined by the square-faced, distinguished-looking woman who had looked at her so keenly on hearing her sing. Again the young girl felt the woman's dark eyes upon her.

"You're our beacon and our pride,
Shadyside! Shadyside!"

hummed Betty softly, turning away with the filled cup for Richard Gordon.

Suddenly the distinguished-looking woman stepped in front of the young girl and threw out her hand in a vehement, characteristic fashion.

"Pardon, mine child, but you haf a luffy voice. You haf never trained heem?"

"Oh, no!" stammered Betty, in surprise. "I—I never thought it worth the training, you see!"

"You mistake. You haf der talent."

"I? Oh, thank you. But if you could hear Ada Nansen, one of our Shadyside girls, sing, I'm afraid you'd never say that again!" exclaimed the generous-hearted Betty. She was almost stupefied with surprise.

"Hear her? I laugh! I haf heard her too much already. I know her from A to Z. A luffy voice, and dat is all. She is lazy. She no work. I laugh!" The woman proceeded to do so and the laugh was strangely musical.

Betty could only stare with astonishment as the woman turned her back and proceeded to get a drink from the water cooler.

Coming down the aisle with her cup of water, Betty met the grinning conductor.

"Hobnobbing with celebrities, are you?" he teased.

"Please, who is that woman?" whispered Betty. Her eyes were bright with excitement.

"Frau Zitterman, the celebrated German singer."

The cup of water almost fell to the floor.

"Look out! You're spilling water on me!" exclaimed a furious voice. "How inexcusably careless!"

Betty Gordon's brown eyes were full of distress as they met the flashing, dark ones of the little brunette. She murmured a quick apology but the other girl threw her an indignant look and maintained a resentful silence as she brushed the water from her dress.

"Shadyside! Shadyside!" yelled the brakeman. "All out for Shadyside!"

There was a mad scramble for belongings and in the confusion Betty, for the moment, forgot the unpleasant episode.

The beautiful, little gray stone station was overflowing with Salsette cadets and Shadyside students.

They were spilled upon the long, roofed-over platform and in groups of threes and fours were eagerly awaiting the departure of the school busses which were partially filled.

"What a pretty picture!" exclaimed Esther Littell, and waved a hand at the gray stone station with its green tile roof, the blue and silver uniforms of the Salsette cadets, the yellow, blue

and rose flannel sport dresses of the chattering Shadyside students.

"Isn't it?" answered Anne Warner quietly, but Betty noticed that the girl's eyes were dark with anxiety.

"Betty!" chuckled Teddy Tucker, the "light twin," "our little brunette who made such kind remarks about us on the train is getting in the school bus for Shadyside. I want you to know!"

Betty groaned. "Just my luck! I'm in her black looks already. I spilled water on her."

Tommy Tucker grinned maliciously. "It would take a lot of water to put out that child's fireworks. She's got a temper, or I'm no judge of human nature."

"Here comes Miss Prettyman!" giggled Bobby Littell mischievously. "Run, Tommy! Run!"

A severe-looking, elderly woman was advancing toward them, looking anxiously to right and left.

"How do you do, young ladies and young gentlemen," she said primly. "I am looking for Frau Zitterman. Mrs. Eustice sent down a car for her. May I inquire if she came down on your train?"

"Frau Zitterman, the celebrated singer? Oh, surely not!" said the soft-voiced Alice Guerin.

"Why not, may I ask?"

The question in itself was a reprimand and Alice's face turned crimson.

Betty interposed hastily in behalf of her friend.

"Yes, Miss Prettyman, she came down with us. Perhaps she's still on the train."

Miss Prettyman gave a curt nod and drifted trainward.

"Betty Gordon!" gasped the astonished Bobby, "what made you tell her that?"

"It's the truth," answered Betty demurely.

At that moment Norma Guerin, who had been chattering with a group of Shadyside girls, came running breathlessly toward them.

"Guess the news! Guess the news!" she cried excitedly. "Frau Zitterman, the celebrated singer, needs a winter of rest and has accepted a position as teacher of music at Shadyside!"

And Frau Zitterman had said: "You haf a lufly voice—der promise ob great things!"

It was unbelievable! Betty Gordon said nothing, but hugged the knowledge to her heart.

CHAPTER IV

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW

"THIS way to Shadyside!" boomed a stentorian voice.

"This way to Salsette Military Academy!" called out another.

Four stages, partially filled with chattering young people, were backed up near the edge of the gravel driveway. Two of the busses were bound for the Academy across the lake and two for Shadyside.

"Young ladies, give your baggage checks to the porter. This way to Shadyside!" Miss Prettyman had returned and was taking command.

"Gee!" exclaimed Bob in Betty's ear, "isn't she enjoying this? I wonder why Miss Anderson didn't come."

Miss Anderson was the beloved physical training teacher.

Betty looked worried. "Gracious, I hope Miss Anderson is on the faculty this year! I want to go in strong for athletics."

"Good, Betty!" approved Bob. "Our ambi-

tions are the same! So that is Frau Zitterman!" he broke off, his eyes on the dark-eyed, vivacious woman who followed Miss Prettyman and was explaining rather volubly to that dignitary.

"Mine purse—I leaf heem! It was but a forgetfulness!"

"Shadyside! Shadyside! All in for Shadyside!" Again the call.

Richard Gordon turned quickly, kissed Betty and shook hands with Bob. "I shall leave you here," he remarked, "for I am taking the smaller bus into town. Look in your trunks. I put something of value in each of them before they left Orchard Cove. It may help you during the school term. Write to me often."

"I will! I will!" promised Betty almost tearfully as she clung to her uncle's arm.

"And remember, Bob, I leave Betty in your care." Above the clinging figure of the girl, the eyes of man and boy met.

Bob nodded solemnly.

When the bus started, Betty strained her eyes for a last glimpse of her beloved uncle. He was bowing deferentially over the hand of Frau Zitterman.

"Hey, Betty Gordon! where have you been keeping yourself? I have looked everywhere for you."

A girl with a mop of bright red hair waved

frantically from one of the front seats of the bus.

"Hello there, Constance! You came in on the other train, didn't you? I didn't know you were here yet!"

The girl who had first spoken was Constance Howard, an army officer's daughter, from San Francisco.

Betty was conscious of many eyes turned in her direction as Constance sang out her name and she was especially conscious of the keen eyes of the little brunette.

"She's a Shadyside girl!" Betty thought in dismay. "Just my luck!"

Esther Littell leaned forward and whispered in Betty's ear:

"Anne Warner says the little brunette's name is Nina Trull. They live in the same town."

Betty was surprised, for not by word or look had Nina Trull recognized the younger girl.

Esther Littell gave a little exclamation of pleasure as the bus lurched around a curve which brought the beautiful waters of the lake and the gray stone buildings of the school into full view.

Across the lake which divided the two schools, the red brick buildings of Salsette Military Academy reared themselves, sentinel-like and militant.

The school bus rattled up to the administration

building, a handsome edifice connected with three graystone buildings by covered passageways.

"This is where we register," explained Betty to Esther. "At the administration building."

"In those other buildings are the dormitories, the teachers' rooms, the dining room, the infirmary and the kitchens," added Bobby, with a careless wave of the hand.

"You will love it here, Esther!" exclaimed Louise.

"I'm sure of it! Just look at the girls, will you?" exclaimed Esther.

Girls tumbled from the two busses, girls lined the steps of the administration building, and girls stood in groups on the wide porch or leaned against the white columns.

"Hello there!" A sweet-faced girl wearing thick glasses over near-sighted eyes came flying down the stone steps and fell upon Betty and her friends. "I thought you'd never come! I've been here for ages! Oh, Libbie, how good it is to see you again! How's Timothy Derby? How's poetry? How's everything?"

"Fine!" laughed Libbie, embracing her friend and roommate, Frances Martin.

"Hello there, girls! I am surely glad to see you!" called the always fat and good-natured Dora Esterbrooke, hurrying along in the wake of Libbie Littell's roommate.

Betty Gordon looked out with eyes of affection over the campus.

"Shadyside! You are the best!
Shadyside! You lead the rest,"

she hummed happily.

The hall was also crowded with girls as Betty and her friends entered.

A girl who would have been pretty if it had not been for the sullen discontent which lurked in her eyes and around her drooping red lips, turned from the large hall mirror where she had been inspecting herself and nodded languidly to Betty.

"Hello, Betty!" she drawled. "Isn't the first day a beastly bore? My, but you're as brown as a berry!"

"Ada! Ada!" It was the voice of the little brunette.

"Nina, darling!"

The two girls fell into each other's arms.

"Oh, mush!" exclaimed Bobby Littell in Betty's ear.

"Nina, my sweet!" an overdressed, stout girl called out. "How good it is to see you!" and the performance was repeated.

"Ruth Gladys Royal!" exclaimed Esther Littell disdainfully, when she saw this last girl.

Betty gave a little groan. She felt vaguely de-

pressed as the ranks of her old enemies strengthened.

Ada turned and presented her friend. When she reached Betty, she remarked more kindly than her wont:

"This is Betty Gordon, Nina, a girl who always does well what she starts out to do."

"I am the last to doubt it!" remarked Nina Trull laconically. Her eyes sought Betty's brown ones with a world of meaning in their dark depths.

The water spilling had been rather a thorough job. Betty felt the quick, betraying color rush to her cheeks.

"Cat!" hissed Bobby, as Betty and her friends trooped up the broad staircase and crossed one of the corridors which connected the administration building with the dormitories. "She's as hateful as Ada! Two of a kind!"

"Did you notice her when she was introduced to Anne Warner?" whispered Betty indignantly. "She cut Anne dead."

"I noticed it! I wonder——"

"Bobby," interrupted Esther excitedly, tugging at her sister's sleeve, "where are we going? Why didn't you stay down there and register?"

"We're going to our rooms," explained Bobby impatiently. "When we get our hats off we'll go down and register."

"But I haven't any room to go to!" wailed Esther.

"My goodness, don't throw a fit! You'll get a room soon enough!" Bobby was not noted for her patience.

Esther turned to her new friend, Anne Warner, and Betty was amused to hear her say indignantly:

"She thinks we're green because we're freshmen!"

The dormitory was a delightfully sunny building with corridors carpeted in strips of softest green.

A drab-looking, plainly dressed woman advanced to meet them.

"That's our corridor teacher, Miss Martha Nevins. She also teaches history," whispered Betty to Esther Littell.

Miss Martha shook hands with the girls and was duly presented to Esther and Anne. Her plain face flushed with pleasure as she welcomed the girls.

The little party trooped into the three connecting rooms. Bobby and Betty had, at the close of the last term, registered for the middle room with Libbie Littell and Frances Martin on one side and Constance Howard and Louise Littell on the other. Alice and Norma Guerin roomed near by. Esther Littell gave a little cry of pleasure.

"Oh! Little daybeds with cretonne coverings! How pretty! The rooms look more like living rooms than bedrooms."

Constance Howard threw off her hat, exposing a mass of bright red hair. She grinned boyishly.

"That's what I like about them. They are both comfortable and attractive. Welcome to home, sweet home, girls!"

"Your red head will be our beacon light of home, Con," giped Bobby tactlessly.

"I think it's lovely," breathed Anne Warner shyly, and was rewarded with a merry, surprised glance from Constance.

Frances Martin adjusted her glasses more firmly on her nose and exclaimed breathlessly:

"What do you girls think! Frau Zitterman, the celebrated singer, needed a winter of rest and she has consented to be on the faculty at Shady-side. Can you beat it?"

"Oh, Frances, that is quite old stuff," yawned Bobby languidly, in true Ada Nansen style. "Frau Zitterman came down on the train with us."

"Don't you try any Ada Nansen airs on me!" exclaimed Frances, aiming a pillow at her friend. A lively skirmish followed.

"Come, come!" laughed Betty. "A truce! A truce! We must go down and register and find a

room for Esther and Anne! Perhaps by that time George will bring up our trunks."

Anne's eyes grew round.

"Who is George?" she ventured, turning to Betty.

"He's the honorable driver of the school busses," interposed the irrepressible Bobby, "man of all work, and woeful prophet of Shadyside." Betty's gay laugh rang out.

"Well, I hope he brings our trunks up before the luncheon gong sounds. Come on, girls!"

Back they trooped through the wide corridors down the stairway of the administration building and into the foyer.

It was crowded with girls. A young woman wearing a pleasant smile turned at their approach and held out hands of welcome.

"Miss Anderson!" exclaimed Betty. "You gave me quite a fright. I thought perhaps you would not be with us this year."

"Because I was not at the station?" Miss Anderson smiled affectionately at Betty as she shook hands with "her girls."

"We have a larger enrollment than usual," she explained, "and Mrs. Eustice needed me here, so she sent Miss Prettyman down to the station. Miss Prettyman knows Frau Zitterman."

"This is my younger sister, Miss Anderson," said Bobby Littell, pushing Esther forward.

"And this is Anne Warner, who is also a freshman."

"More freshmen!" laughed Miss Anderson, with a comic lift of her eyebrows. "How glad we are to have you," she said, shaking hands with the two girls. "But I am afraid we shall have to put extra beds in the dormitories to accommodate all the freshmen. Have you been assigned to rooms?"

"The rest of us signed up at the end of last term," explained Betty. "But Esther and Anne haven't."

"Well, come this way," and Miss Anderson led the two young girls toward the office adjoining the front hall. "Mrs. Eustice will speak to you in the assembly hall directly after lunch," she called back. "We are holding an informal reception there."

CHAPTER V

NEIGHBORS BUT NOT NEIGHBORLY

IN a few moments the freshmen returned to the hall looking worried and disconsolate.

"There! They couldn't get rooms together!" prophesied Bobby. "I bet a dime to a doughnut!"

"Oh, yes we could!" exclaimed Esther, almost in tears, "but we're in the same unit with that hateful Ruth Gladys Royal and her chum, Ada Nansen."

"Jumping Jupiter!" exclaimed Bobby inelegantly, "couldn't you do any better than that?"

"That is where we were assigned " wailed Esther.

At that moment, Ada Nansen, Ruth Royal and Nina Trull tripped down the staircase and into the foyer. The three girls were holding an eager and animated conversation.

"I hope we are in time for you to get that room," they heard Ada remark to Nina. "Why didn't you wire to hold it?"

"I thought I was going abroad with mother until the last minute!" exclaimed the other im-

patiently. "Then they packed me off to a girls' school. I shall never get over it. It's an outrage!"

Ada Nansen and Ruth Gladys Royal murmured words of sympathy.

"Let's get out of here!" implored Anne Warner, turning to Esther. She had observed Nina Trull advancing down the hall towards them, and Betty saw the freshman's face flush with embarrassment.

"Wonder what's up between those two," whispered the blunt Bobby. "They come from the same town, but they mix like poison and milk!"

"Oh, come on, don't try to solve puzzles!" exclaimed Norma Guerin. "Let's register and then go back to our rooms and see if George has brought up the trunks."

The eight friends agreed and presently returned to their rooms with Esther and Anne trailing disconsolately behind.

"Poor kids!" sighed Alice Guerin. "We've talked so much about Ada's unpleasantness that now they are frightened half out of their wits!" She gave a compassionate backward glance.

Frances Martin gave a little shriek of pleasure as Constance Howard threw open the door of the room which Bobby and Betty shared.

"George has brought up the trunks! Halleluah!"

"We'll have it looking like home in a jiffy!" exclaimed Betty. "I brought some especially pretty pictures this year."

"And I have the loveliest, duckiest tea set!" chimed in Frances Martin.

"We'll have tea parties in our room," murmured Libbie. "How romantic!"

"Romantic nothing!" scoffed Bobby, with cousinly scorn. "Tea, romantic? You pluck romance from every bush, Libbie!"

"That reminds me. Did any of you girls see 'Her Path to Freedom'?" and Libbie rose lazily from her chair and looked anxiously around the room.

"Mrs. Eustice will send you on a 'path to freedom' if she catches you reading such trash!" exclaimed Bobby indignantly, but Libbie only grinned cheerfully and wandered into the adjoining room to hunt for her novel.

Frances Martin, her roommate, murmured something about unpacking and soon followed.

"Well, Connie," said Louise Littell, "we must get into our own room. Betty and Bobby want to dress before the gong sounds for luncheon, and all of us need to do a little unpacking."

"Me for a good tubbing, girls," laughed Constance Howard, running slender fingers through her red hair. "I'm slightly travel-stained!"

Betty was about to make some laughing re-

mark when the door was thrown open and Esther and Anne burst pell-mell into the room.

"Oh, guess what has happened!" wailed Esther excitedly. "Ada Nansen wanted our room for Nina Trull and Violet Canby and she's peeved because we are in it. They won't speak to us!"

Esther laughed hysterically, then sank into a chair and began to cry.

"What's all the rumpus?" exclaimed Frances Martin, poking her head in at the door. Louise Littell looked over Connie's shoulder and then advanced into Betty's room. Two spots of flame appeared on either cheek.

"Ada Nansen had better not try any of her mean little bag of tricks on Esther!" she exclaimed indignantly. "I'll not have her picking on my sister."

"Bravo! A declaration of war!" exclaimed Bobby, striking a dramatic gesture. Then her face sobered and she swooped down upon the weeping girl.

"Don't cry, honey child! Don't cry! I'll see Mrs. Eustice about it. We'll try to get you another room."

Anne Warner looked troubled.

"I—I think Ada Nansen wished to ignore me because Nina Trull and I are—not friends," she said reluctantly. "Perhaps Esther would fare bet-

ter with that crowd if she were to get another roommate."

Esther dried her tears and looked up at her new friend.

"I'll do nothing of the kind!" she exclaimed loyally. "You're the only freshman I know. Besides, I like you! I'll stay with you as long as you'll have me!"

Anne Warner's face flushed with pleasure.

"Come on, Betty," said the practical Bobby. "Let's take these girls back to their rooms. I'll fix Ada Nansen and Ruth Gladys Royal! We'll lock the connecting door and pocket the key. 'Neighbors, but not neighborly,' is the slogan from now on until we can get Mrs. Eustice to give them another room."

CHAPTER VI

A SILLY TRICK

ORDER had scarcely been restored and the girls dressed before the gong sounded for luncheon.

Students came trooping out of every doorway into the corridors and down the broad staircase to the long dining room.

It was a beautiful, sunlit room. At the northern end was a large fireplace decorated with brass andirons. Round tables, seating six or eight, filled the room. They were of darkest mahogany and each table held a brass bowl filled with scarlet sage. Over the mantel hung a copy of the famous painting of Da Vinci's, "The Last Supper."

"Here's our old table near the door!" cried Norma eagerly, but Betty and Bobby hung back, impelled by the same thought.

"We must look out for Esther and Anne," whispered Bobby. "They feel strange and new, you know!"

Betty nodded, but a moment later the two girls waved gayly from a group of freshmen who were seated at the next table.

"They're all set!" exclaimed Frances Martin,

with quiet satisfaction. "Come, let's surround our old table before some one else beats us to it. You know it's now or never, for we have to sit in the same seat all year!"

Betty found herself close to Esther Littell who sat at the next table.

Esther leaned backward and whispered in Betty's ear: "We freshmen are just crazy to know who's who at the teachers' tables."

She nodded to the four tables over by the window which were reserved for the teachers. "Of course the one with that beautiful gray hair is Mrs. Eustice, the principal, but the others have us guessing."

"The one who is waving her hands and talking so volubly is Madame Le Foy, the French teacher," Betty informed her. "You have met Miss Martha Nevins, our corridor teacher. She also teaches history. That is her sister, Miss Harriet, sitting by Miss Martha."

"That's Miss Prettyman on the right of Miss Harriet, but who is sitting on the other side of Miss Prettyman?" asked Esther.

"That's Miss Morris, our school nurse, and next to Miss Morris is our beloved Miss Anderson and next to Miss Anderson sits Frau Zitterman. As you know, it is her first term at Shadyside."

Esther lowered her voice and whispered:

"Betty, Ada Nansen is furious because Frau Zitterman is on the faculty. I heard her raving about it to Ruth Gladys Royal."

Betty looked her surprise and pondered over this amazing fact as she partook of Aunt Nancy's excellent meal.

"One hundred and eighty girls enrolled this year!" exclaimed Bobby to Betty as their little crowd wandered out into the corridor when luncheon was over. "That's the largest enrollment ever! Guess I'd better wait and speak to Mrs. Eustice in the assembly—about Esther and Anne's room. I know she's frightfully busy now, and there isn't much time."

The assembly room was almost filled when Betty and her friends entered.

Promptly at the appointed time, Mrs. Eustice, the beautiful, gray-haired principal, arose, and with her usual graciousness gave the address of welcome.

She was simply but exquisitely dressed; a woman so well groomed that Bobby Littell had once remarked:

"Mrs. Eustice always makes me remember the snap fastener I forgot to sew on."

Smilingly, the principal introduced the faculty and explained the rules of the school.

"Our enrollment this year is the largest in the history of the school," she announced. "We are

at our wit's end to accommodate all students who have applied, therefore, I beg of you, if you have the interest of Shadyside at heart, to be patient through these first few weeks of adjustment, and, under these conditions, I especially ask of you not to make any requests for changes in rooms. It will cause endless confusion and worry.

"Frau Zitterman will now lead in the singing of our school song after which I shall be glad to have a little personal word with each of you. We welcome you to Shadyside!"

A soft clapping of hands followed the principal's speech. Presently Betty and her friends, led by the wonderful voice of Frau Zitterman, were singing happily:

"Shadyside! You are the best!
Shadyside! You lead the rest!
You're our beacon and our pride,
Shadyside! Shadyside!"

The voice of the celebrated singer filled the assembly room and caused much comment among the girls.

"How did we ever capture a song bird like that?" whispered Edith Ames to Esther Littell. "I paid five dollars a seat to hear her sing in New York."

"Nervous breakdown," Betty heard Esther explain.

Suddenly Bobby leaned over and said in a low voice to Betty:

"What in the world are Ada Nansen and Ruth Royal doing?"

"I don't know," returned Betty. "They're drawing something on a big square of cardboard."

"Must be awfully funny. They've giggled and worked on it all during Mrs. Eustice's address."

"They're giggling over it now!"

"Some kind of mischief, I'll warrant!" said Bobby grimly. "I guess Esther will have to stick it out about the room since Mrs. Eustice asked it. But she can keep the door locked, thank goodness!"

The reception over, Betty and her chums set about getting settled, not only in their rooms but in their classes as well. This took time, and before the young students knew it, several days had passed.

During that time Betty and her chums made a discovery which made all of them but Esther wonder. The youngest Littell girl said she knew it already.

"Anne told me the first night we were here," she said.

Anne was, in part, working her way through Shadyside. She was to wait on the table at times and she did other odd tasks about the school.

"And I don't care," declared Esther. "I love

her just the same, even if she does have to work!"

"Why, of course you do," answered Betty.

One afternoon Betty and Bobby were passing along the corridor outside of the room occupied by Ada and Ruth Gladys Royal when they heard high-pitched voices.

Miss Martha Nevins, the corridor teacher, stood in the doorway of Ada and Ruth's room.

"Gee!" exclaimed Bobby, clutching at Betty's arm. "She and Ada are quarreling. Just listen to the rumpus!"

Involuntarily the two girls paused and looked into Ada's room.

Ada stood in the middle of the floor with crimson cheeks and downcast eyes.

Beyond her was the closed door of the room which Esther and Anne occupied. On its dark surface was tacked a huge square of white cardboard on which these words were printed:

DO NOT OPEN

PRIVATE ROOM
FOR
WAITRESSES

CHAPTER VII

MORE TROUBLE WITH ADA

"WAITRESSES! The nerve! The idea!" gasped Bobby Littell, fairly bristling with anger, but Betty held out a restraining hand as the indignant voice of the corridor teacher exclaimed:

"Answer me at once, Ada! Why this silly, senseless sign which you know is strictly against the rules?"

From somewhere within the room came the wheedling voice of Ruth Gladys Royal.

"Oh, Miss Martha, it was just a joke. You see those girls in there don't like us and they've caused us no end of trouble. Finally they locked us out. So we just thought we'd have a little fun and tack up that sign!"

Ruth Gladys was quite unconscious that Bobby and Betty were outside. Ada gave her friend a warning signal, but it came too late.

At Ruth Gladys' gross misrepresentation of the facts, Bobby gave a little cry of angry protest and Miss Nevins, turning, saw the two girls.

"That isn't true!" stormed Bobby. "The room is occupied by my younger sister and Anne

Warner. I locked the door myself because Ada and Ruth Gladys were nasty because Nina Trull and Violet Canby couldn't occupy it. They wouldn't speak to the girls. Esther and Anne came into our room crying about it!"

"Ada!" exclaimed Miss Nevins. "After all Mrs. Eustice's talk about our crowded condition, the ideals of Shadyside, the cultivating of a right spirit among upper and lower classmen! But why—may I ask—the word, 'waitresses'?"

Ada lifted sullen eyes from the floor.

"Well, of course, Esther Littell is all right, but Nina says that Anne Warner is very common. She—she is to wait on table, and I don't think people like that should come to Shadyside and force the acquaintance of girls outside their class. It isn't fair she gave it to a girl like Anne Warner—so there!"

"A girl like Anne Warner!" Miss Martha Nevins repeated Ada's words, her voice trembling with anger. "Ada Nansen, the girl you call 'common' comes of people of education and standing. It is true Anne's immediate family have lost their money and Anne is compelled, in part, to work her way through school, but her ancestry has helped to form the backbone of our nation and, what is infinitely better, she is herself a girl of unquestionable character and good breeding. In fact, she is so high-minded that it would be

impossible for her to get any fun out of printing a silly, unkind card like that."

"I didn't know Miss Martha could talk so spunkily!" whispered Betty in Bobby's ear.

Ada began to cry.

"It was all a—a—joke. Of course, you'll make a big thing out of it because you—you don't like me!"

Miss Martha turned to Bobby. There was a look of stern determination on her usually gentle face.

"Go and tell Esther and Anne to report in Mrs. Eustice's office at once."

Bobby bowed.

"Come, Ada and Ruth, I will take this matter up with Mrs. Eustice," went on the teacher.

"Oh, Miss Martha," pleaded Ruth Gladys, "please don't be so hard on us! We'll take the sign down. We only meant it for fun!"

But Miss Martha turned a deaf ear to this plea and Betty watched the trio disappear down the corridor.

Bobby looked at Betty in dismay.

"Oh, my!" she exclaimed, "isn't this a pretty kettle of fish for Esther? The poor kid will be scared half out of her wits!" and Bobby knocked on the closed door of her sister's room.

As Betty went on down the corridor and entered her own room, Constance Howard came

running to meet her with outstretched hands.

"Oh, Betty, Betty! Shadyside is going to have a pageant on the campus—it is to be both musical and dramatic!"

"When?"

"Some time in October. The notice has just been bulletined!"

"Oh, I am so glad. The campus is especially lovely this fall."

"And Frau Zitterman was in here to see you," went on Constance breathlessly. "I'll bet anything she's thinking of you for a leading part!"

"If there's much singing to be done," answered Betty generously, "you know Ada Nansen will get the part. Good or bad, she has a lovely voice."

"Frau Zitterman left this note," went on Constance. "Oh, that woman has a marvelous voice to be in a place like this!"

"I know it," said Betty, and unfolded the slip of white paper wonderingly. It read:

"Dear Miss Gordon:

"I have rented the gray stone bungalow near the edge of the campus and would like to have you call about a very important matter. I shall expect you some time between three-thirty and four. Get a permit from Mrs. Eustice.

"Meta Zitterman."

Flushing with surprise and pleasure, Betty handed the note to her friend.

"Read that! What do you suppose she has to say to me?"

"It's about the pageant probably. Oh, Betty, I'm so glad!"

But Betty only shook her head and glanced at the clock.

"Three-fifteen! Where's my hat! I must run!"

The door to Mrs. Eustice's office was closed when Betty knocked softly.

"It's just an old grudge, Miss Martha has against me, that's all!" exclaimed the angry, tearful voice of Ada Nansen from within.

Mrs. Eustice opened the door and Betty quickly explained her errand. The principal nodded and, going to her desk, returned with a printed permit to leave the premises.

"One moment!" she called, as Betty turned away. "You were with Bobby when she locked the door between Ada's room and Esther's, were you not?"

"Yes, Mrs. Eustice," acknowledged Betty reluctantly.

"Come in a moment, please."

With a sinking heart, Betty obeyed.

Ada was standing near a desk and flashed her a resentful look.

Miss Nevins, Ruth Gladys Royal, Bobby, Esther and Anne were all seated about the room. The two freshmen looked thoroughly frightened.

The beautiful, cultured woman who had helped to fashion so many girls of uncertain temperament into a correct womanly mold, looked at the little group for a moment and her face saddened.

"I wish to be just," she murmured softly. "There is a pettiness in this incident which shocks me—it is so foreign to the ideals and standards that I have constantly tried to set before my girls at Shadyside. But that any of you should stoop to deceit or untruth saddens me even more. Bobby, please repeat your story."

Bobby obeyed.

At its conclusion, the principal turned to Betty.

"Can you verify this?"

"I can."

Ada flashed Betty a look of intense dislike.

"Then you may go, and thank you." There was infinite weariness in the lovely voice.

Sick at heart, Betty walked down the steps of the administration building and out into the beautiful grounds.

"Now Ada will be peeved all year," she groaned. "This year is starting all wrong, and I can't help it! I have tried so hard to make her my friend!"

"Betty! Betty!" Norma Guerin came run-

ning up one of the walks which led to the lake. "We've looked everywhere for you! Miss Anderson has her rowing class down on the lake. We're having a rowing contest. Come on, quick, or you'll miss the fun!"

"I can't, Norma," and Betty explained.

"Think of it! An invitation to call from the Shadyside celeb! Oh, Betty, you lucky girl!"

Somewhat cheered by Norma's nonsense, Betty went on her way after promising to stop by the lake on her return.

Ushered by a maid into Frau Zitterman's living room, she found the singer waiting for her.

"Ach, how goot it is to see you, Fräulein Gordon!" The dark-eyed German woman advanced and held out her hand graciously. "I am happy to haf you in mein home."

With a few words of thanks, Betty took a proffered chair, wondering what this fascinating and charming woman could have to say to her. Not for long was she held in doubt.

"I haf had an interview with your uncle, ofer der phone," she began. "Now don't be surbrised, for I know him a year or more, yes. I tell heem you haf a voice of unusual promise. He is but delighted and beg of me to train heem—der voice. I say 'yes, mit pleasure!' "

Frau Zitterman threw out her hands in a char-

acteristic gesture and beamed upon the bewildered girl.

"You see!" she cried, jumping up from her chair and pacing restlessly up and down the floor, "Mrs. Eustice haf great plans for Shadyside dis year. Der wedder man haf prophesize luffly wedder far into der vinter, so we plan to have a school pageant—or musical play—on der campus. It vill take lots ob singers. I train dem. You haf a voice as clear as a bell but it lacks depth and tone. I bring heem out! I gif you lessons. Your uncle ask it!"

"Oh!" breathed Betty softly, "I feel like Cinderella under the fairy's magic wand."

Frau Zitterman threw back her head and laughed delightedly. "You are—what say?—unusual girl. I see it from der beginnings. You vill vork. I haf no time for der lazy pupil. Your fine Uncle Dick, he say, 'If my leddle Betty haf a voice, I shall spare no expense. I shall be consume with pride!' "

"Oh, did Uncle Dick say that?" exclaimed Betty joyously. "I shall be glad to help in the Pageant and take the lessons. You are so kind!"

Frau Zitterman turned toward the baby grand piano and for about twenty minutes had the girl running through scales and other tests, also the music to be used in the Pageant. Then she turned impulsively.

"You haf der promise of a wonderful voice, but you must vork. It means singing scales effery day ven der heart is singing an aria. It is not easy, mine friend.

"As you know, I take a vacation from der concert stage dis year. I haf a great nervousness. Mine goot friend, Mrs. Eustice, write me dat dis cottage by der lake is empty and to come and rest beside mine very goot friend and help her a leedle with the Pageant and in der assembly. Gladly I come at der call of mine friend."

A few moments later, a transformed Betty sped back over the campus. But underneath the joy was a vague misgiving that Ada Nansen would resent a rival in the field of song.

Her thoughts returned to the queer-looking man who had threatened Ada's father.

"Something wrong there," thought Betty. "I wonder what it can be?"

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE LAKE

MISS ANDERSON and a number of Shadyside girls came trooping up from the lake as Betty approached the dormitory.

"Oh, Betty!" called Norma Guerin, running to meet her friend, "wait a minute! You came too late! The rowing contest is over!"

Betty looked her disappointment.

"Who won?" she asked.

"Nina Trull. My, but that girl is strong! I thought once I would come within an ace of catching her, but she won by a boat length." Norma sighed. "She challenged me to a tennis match, but I told her I wouldn't cut much of a figure at tennis, that you and Connie Howard were the tennis players of Shadyside."

At that moment Nina Trull and Ada Nansen passed. Nina's dark face was flushed with triumph. Seeing Betty, she called out:

"Miss Gordon, can't we arrange a tennis match some day?"

"Perhaps we can," answered Betty courteously. Try as she would, she could not forget Nina's

rude action on the train, and so there was not much warmth to her words.

"You don't like her!" whispered Norma. "I don't either. She's got an awful temper, or I'm badly mistaken! When she looked and saw that my boat had almost overtaken her, she looked as if she'd gladly brain me with an oar!"

The two girls laughed and Norma questioned:

"And now haven't you something to tell me, Bettykins? I'm consumed with curiosity!"

Betty assumed a vacuous, innocent expression.

"What could the girl possibly want to know?" she asked of the weeping willow trees.

Norma shook her friend softly and, giggling, the two girls entered the administration building.

"Uncle Dick has arranged for Frau Zitterman to give me lessons in voice," Betty explained. Not for worlds, even to Norma, would she tell what the celebrated singer had said. Modesty sealed her lips.

"You lucky girl! And we are to have a Pageant on the campus soon. I'm so glad! I know you'll be given a prominent part."

Up the wide stairway, across the corridors and into the bedrooms of the dormitory, the two girls scurried, each to her separate room.

Bobby raised a flushed face from her book as Betty entered.

"Oh, Betty!" she groaned, "Mrs. Eustice sen-

tenced Ada and Ruth Gladys to ten hours in the study hall. It'll take them four or five days to make it up. Ada was furious!"

"How did Mrs. Eustice settle about Anne and Esther's room?"

"They stay put with the door locked—same as before. I took it on myself to lock the door. I should have asked permission," confessed Bobby ruefully.

Betty laughed a little, recalling impulsive Bobby's rather high-handed methods, and after a moment Bobby reluctantly joined in the laughter.

The next few days passed more smoothly. Classes had begun to function normally.

The freshmen across the hall from Betty's room were seething with suppressed excitement, expecting nightly a visit of the school's secret society, the "Mysterious Four." Their unrest had communicated itself to Esther and Anne, who sought Betty's room.

"O-oh!" shivered Esther, "is the initiation so very scary?"

Betty smiled. "That is according to what command you draw. Remember how mad Jessie Wood was last year, Bobby? Her command was to go to bed!"

Bobby laughed and nodded her head.

The Mysterious Four was an organization of the girls to promote good feeling and good fel-

lowship among the students. Seniors were supposed to carry on the sacred rites of initiation.

"O-oh!" shivered Esther excitedly, "I wonder what they'll tell me to do!"

"We'll just have to wait and see," answered the more matter-of-fact Anne.

Anne Warner was now waiting on table regularly in the dining room. Once Betty saw her helping the office girls in Mrs. Eustice's office. Anne was an excellent typist. She was also a hard student and Betty wondered how the girl could manage to do so much with a none-too-strong constitution.

Esther continued loyal to her new friend, and after a long talk with Miss Martha Nevins, Bobby had seemed satisfied to have the intimacy continue.

However, Ada Nansen, Ruth Gladys Royal, Nina Trull and their followers ignored the Shady-side freshman who waited on the table so deftly and efficiently.

Faithfully, Betty followed the direction of Frau Zitterman. Each day after school hours she would practice scales and exercises, breathing from her abdomen as the celebrated singer directed.

At first it was rather a bore to the energetic Betty, but Frau Zitterman continued to fire her

ambition and an enthusiastic letter from her Uncle Dick added fuel to the flame.

She was unusually interested in athletics and had entered in both the tennis and the basketball preliminaries. She did not expect to do much at basketball, but hoped for better things in tennis.

These wholesome exercises combined with rowing and the singing lessons kept Betty in a state of perfect health.

The lovely weather continued. September was as balmy as June, and Mrs. Eustice began to consult with Miss Anderson about a series of outdoor events.

Many of the girls who loved to row had been clamoring for some sort of contest on the lake, and on an afternoon of the second week of school the juniors were called out and twenty-four were chosen to take part in a contest.

"This will not be a very formal affair," said Miss Anderson. "I will divide you into four crews of six each."

"Where are we to row to?" asked Constance Howard.

"You are to row to that large black rock on Rock Island," and the teacher pointed to a small island far out in the lake. "The first boat to reach the island wins."

The crew to which Betty was assigned included

Bobby, Constance, Frances, Libbie, and Norma. By unanimous consent, Betty was selected for the important position of stroke oar.

The girls were curious to see what Ada Nansen and Ruth Gladys Royal would do; but they were not kept long in doubt. Nina Trull became the stroke oar of another crew with Ada, Ruth, and their chums under her.

"They tell me Nina is a first-class oarsman," whispered Norma to Betty.

"Well, we'll do our best—that's all we can do," was the answer.

The boats lined up side by side and Miss Anderson looked each crew over carefully.

"All ready!" she called out sharply.

There was a moment of intense silence.

"Go!" was the command.

Twenty-four oars dropped into the water almost simultaneously and the four boats were off to a beautiful start. Betty and her chums had rowed together a number of times, so it was fairly easy for the others to follow the stroke. Only Libbie began to puff.

"Not—so—fast!" she panted between her strokes.

"Keep still and save your wind," came heartlessly from Bobby. "Betty knows what she's doing."

At first the boat commanded by Jessie Snow

crept into the lead. But the race was too swift for this craft and gradually it fell behind while the boat containing Betty and her friends forged to the front. There were wild cheers from the shore as the spectators watched the progress of the race with keen interest.

"Row, Betty Gordon! Row!"

"Go ahead, Jessie Snow!"

"See! See! Nina Trull's boat is creeping up!"

"Look! Look!" gasped Frances, wildly.

"That Trull crowd can certainly row."

"Steady! Steady!" came from Betty.

She increased the stroke, trusting that all the rowers would follow. For a minute or two they did, with the result that they drew a full boat length ahead of the craft containing Nina Trull, Ada, and the others. Then Libbie "caught a crab," as it is called, and threw not only herself but also Norma out of stroke.

"Oh!" cried Norma, in dismay. "Look what you've done!"

"Steady! Watch the stroke!" exclaimed Betty.

"Now then—pull! Pull for all you're worth!"

Away the boat skimmed over the waters of the lake. But the rival boat kept gaining steadily. The other two were several boat lengths behind.

"Hit her up, Betty!" cried Bobby. "We've got to beat 'em!"

"Pull! Pull!" came from Nina frantically. "We can win yet!"

Rock Island was now close by, and the big black rock only a short distance off. Betty and her chums bent to their oars, and so did their rivals. Just as the black rock was reached the boats came up bow to bow and stern to stern.

"A tie!" gasped Betty and Connie as in one breath.

The rival boat had gone on and reached the far side of the big rock. Then Nina Trull called out to cease rowing, and, standing up, waved gayly to Miss Anderson on the distant shore.

"Now what do you think about that?" gritted Bobby indignantly. "It was a tie—pure and simple—but they want Miss Anderson to think they won!"

"Don't blow up, Bobby. You know they can't put anything over on Miss Anderson. She has her field glasses!"

"Oh, I know, Betty, but it makes me so mad! It's so dishonest!"

"Well, we can't expect anything better of that crowd," remarked Constance philosophically. "Let's return."

Somewhat disturbed by the turn of events, they rowed to the school dock.

"Good work, girls," cried Miss Anderson

gayly, as the two boats approached. "It was a beautiful tie!"

"Tie? Why, Miss Anderson," asked Nina Trull innocently, "didn't you mean beyond the big rock? We were a boat length ahead."

"To is not beyond," observed Miss Anderson dryly. "It was undoubtedly a tie. However, I am willing to give each of you another chance and run twelve singles to-morrow, if you wish."

"Oh, thank you," murmured Ada Nansen sweetly. "May we choose our boats now, so we can practice and get accustomed to them?"

"Certainly." Miss Anderson looked at her wrist watch. "Now I have a freshman gym class. This is your last period and you girls may spend a half hour of practice on the lake, if you wish."

After much hesitation and argument, the twelve boats were chosen. Only the twelve girls remained on the lake. The others drifted toward the dormitory after the slender figure of Miss Anderson.

"I'll always know my craft," giggled Betty. "It's such a bright red!"

"Not any louder than my pea-green one," laughed Bobby.

"Nina Trull is the best sculler in that crowd," commented Betty, looking out on the lake to

where a little black boat sped swiftly over the water. "She's the only really good one."

"Well, we're not so bad. Let's practice and lick 'em!" grinned the boyish Bobby.

Thus admonished, Betty Gordon and her friends began rowing in earnest. About fifteen minutes of strenuous work, and then Connie and Libbie pulled alongside of Betty and Bobby.

"Girls, look!" exclaimed Connie excitedly, pointing a dripping oar toward the bank. "There's a man over there! He's been acting so queerly. I've been watching him for the last five minutes."

Betty turned and looked toward the shore. A man stood on the bank. He was shading his eyes with his hand and peering intently at the windows of the Shadyside dormitory.

Something in the attitude of the man was strangely familiar. Memory awakened.

"It's that queer man we saw on the train!" gasped Betty. "The man who afterwards had the quarrel with Ada Nansen's father. I wonder what he is doing here!"

CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

BETTY GORDON turned excitedly to Bobby.

"You remember when we came down on the train from Orchard Cove? You remember the man who groaned so much?"

Bobby nodded.

"That's the same man!" cried Betty.

"Well, what of it?" demanded the blunt Bobby. "Let him groan. Plenty of space to groan in out here."

"But he's not groaning," pointed out the quick-witted Connie, "at least I can't hear him—but I've seen enough to know he's acting in a mighty queer way. He keeps hiding behind the trees and peering at the dormitory windows until he's given me the creeps!"

"Oh!" cried Betty in distress, remembering the angry words of the two men in Washington, "I'm afraid he's here for no good!"

"What makes you think that?" demanded Bobby.

"Well, it's like this," and Betty began her recital with the mysterious stranger's queer actions

on the train and led up to the angry conversation she and Bob had overheard between the queer man and Mr. Nansen.

"One of the things he said to Mr. Nansen was, 'I'll get even with you for this!'" went on Betty.

"What were they quarreling over?" demanded Connie, with interest.

"I don't know."

"Oh, do you suppose the queer man's planning some harm for Ada?" gasped Connie. "What ought we to do?"

"Perhaps he's planning to abduct her and get a ransom!" suggested the romantic Libbie.

For once the girls did not laugh. After a moment Bobby exclaimed:

"Nonsense! Perhaps he's working here. Let's pull to shore and saunter his way. We may find out."

"Oh!" exclaimed Libbie, valiantly repressing a shiver of fear. "I—I'm too tired. I—I guess I'll not go."

"If you are too tired," said Bobby with gentle irony which was quite lost upon the comfort-loving Libbie, "we will excuse you."

"Why, I don't see him now!" exclaimed Connie, in surprise.

Leaving Libbie, the other girls tied their boats

near some weeping willow trees which bordered the lake.

"There he is!" whispered Betty. "Directly in front of us, standing behind that big weeping willow!"

"O-oh!" shivered Connie, "suppose he jumps at us?"

"Why should he?" demanded the practical Bobby.

"By all the laws of etiquette, he shouldn't," tittered Connie.

"I think I shall arm myself with a weapon of defense," giggled Betty nervously, and stopped to pick up a fallen stick. The other two girls followed her example.

At close range the mysterious stranger appeared far from belligerent. He was standing against the trunk of a big weeping willow tree. A sad, far-away look was in his big, dark eyes.

"How do you do?" began Betty, feeling very ill at ease.

"How do you do?" he answered gravely.

Silence.

"Er—it's a lovely day," offered Connie nervously.

"Yes."

"How do you like our school?" broke in Betty cheerfully. She was growing tired of so much solemnity.

"Your school? Oh, yes, Shadyside, I believe you call it? It is very nice." Then an expression of indescribable bitterness crossed his melancholy face. "Very nice—for the rich."

"I think I have met you before," ventured Betty, determined to make conversation.

The queer man fixed a pair of inquiring eyes upon her.

"On the train going down to Washington. You dropped a notebook which I returned to you."

"Ah! I remember you now. 'Again I offer my sincere thanks for its recovery,'" returned the man so courteously that the three girls, feeling very silly, threw down their sticks almost simultaneously.

"Its recovery was more important than you think," went on the stranger. "It meant much to me! Much!" he added passionately, and a light, almost fanatical, leaped to his dark eyes.

Unconsciously the girls drew closer together.

"I remember you quite well," returned Betty, "for I saw you later in Washington. You and Mr. Nansen were talking at the side door of an office building. You seemed very angry with him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queer man excitedly. "I had reason to be! Some day I will show that man!"

An almost insane light crept into his dark eyes and Betty noticed that he panted for breath like a spent runner.

"Do you know Mr. Nansen's daughter goes to school here?" she asked.

A queer expression crossed the man's face and he shot Betty a strange look in which fear and suspicion were blended, then turned away as if to avoid further conversation.

But Betty was not through with him.

"Have you some relative in the school?" she inquired pleasantly.

The man threw her a suspicious look.

"Why do you think that?" he demanded resentfully.

"Well, that's the reason most men have who are found on the grounds," replied the undaunted Betty.

The mysterious stranger seemed somewhat taken aback by this unexpected answer, and, muttering something about fine old trees, he slunk away toward the entrance gates.

"Trees, nothing!" exclaimed Connie excitedly. "He was looking at the windows of the dormitory. He didn't have any business here. He looks like a fanatic—a bomb thrower—a—o—oh—I wonder what he has against the Nansens!"

"I hope he isn't plotting any mischief against

Ada," said Betty uneasily. "I wonder if we should warn her!"

"And get snubbed for our pains?" demanded the blunt Bobby. "Not much, we will!"

"Let's watch," suggested Connie eagerly, "and if he returns we can report it to Mrs. Eustice."

The girls agreed.

"Perhaps our fears are all for nothing—as useless to us as our sticks," laughed Betty.

"Didn't you feel silly?" giggled Connie. "He didn't look as if he'd hurt a flea until he got that funny glitter in his eye. I wonder if, as Libbie suggested, he could be planning to abduct Ada just to spite her father?"

"Oh, surely not," replied the sensible Betty. "You know how romantic dear old Libbie is."

Connie waved her hand airily at the back of the mysterious stranger. "There he goes out the front entrance! Joy go with him! Come, let's go put the boats up. The poor little freshies are to be initiated to-night, and of course we want to be in on the fun."

"Are you helping with the initiation, Connie?" inquired Bobby Littell.

"Oh, no. The senior class is so large this year they are not asking the juniors for help."

CHAPTER X

INITIATION FUN

AFTER dinner four veiled figures visited the rooms of the freshmen and all new students and commanded them to assemble in the study hall to take their first degree into the order of the Mysterious Four.

Betty was hurrying through the corridor when Thelma Johnson, president of the senior class, clutched her by the arm.

"Oh, Betty, just a moment," she whispered. "Will you do me a favor? We're so busy with this initiation and one of our commands requires the keys to the trunk room. Will you get them for us? I know you can wheedle them out of Dave."

"Yes, of course!" answered Betty.

"You see," explained Thelma, lowering her voice, "that's one of our best commands and we don't want to give it up. The victim's test of character is to go to the trunk room, sit on the floor in the dark, and chant dismally, four times:

"I sat in the trunk room
All alone! All alone! All alone!

And I heard the tread of fleshless feet!
Fleshless, fleshless, fleshless feet!
And they were wrapped in a winding sheet,
Winding, winding, winding sheet.'"

"O-oh!" shivered Betty delightedly. "That's a good one! I'll get the key!"

As she was hurrying along Connie called out:

"Whither away?"

"To the basement. They need the keys to the trunk room for an initiation stunt. Come and go with me."

The two girls found Dave McGuire, the grizzled janitor, busily cleaning the already clean basement.

He grinned a welcome at the two girls.

"What can I do for you, young ladies?" he asked.

"We want the keys to the trunk room, Dave, for an initiation stunt," explained Betty confidently. "You'll give them to us, won't you?"

The trusted janitor of Shadyside looked down into Betty's lovely, glowing face and his eyes softened.

"Sure, Miss Betty! Help yourself!" and he held them out.

A few moments later, she handed the keys of the trunk room over to the smiling Thelma.

"Oh, thank you!" cried the senior president

warmly. "You'll be down, Betty, and see the fun, of course?"

"Oh, yes, I wouldn't miss it for worlds!"

When Betty Gordon and her roommates entered the study hall, it was buzzing with excitement and they saw that the willing victims were huddled in the front rows of seats. Esther and Anne were among them. Also the new junior, Nina Trull. The latter wore a bored expression which was somewhat affected.

The initiation into the first degree of the Mysterious Four began. The fun waxed fast and furious as the absurd stunts continued.

"I think it's absurd we have to come year in and year out to this," grumbled the discontented voice of Ada Nansen, "just because it is Mrs. Eustice's pet scheme to promote 'good fellowship and sisterliness.' I'd hate to think we'd have to be 'sisterly' to some of these freshies—waitresses especially."

For the most part, the stunts, so-called, were very harmless. One girl, wearing a waste-paper basket for a crown, marched around the room holding up a feather duster and declaring herself to be Cleopatra looking for a boarding house. Another girl clutched a cake of white soap in her hand and went around asking each girl in turn if she would not like to have a bite of her ice-cream. A third girl—and this was Esther—had

to mount to the top of a rather wobbly stepladder and from this exalted position chant all she knew of the verses of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

"I'll fall—I know I shall!" wailed Esther.

"That's all right," declared one of the Mysterious Four. "Lamb is too high now; it ought to come down," and this brought a general giggle.

One girl had to place a visiting card on the gate post at the entrance of the campus and still another was required to go to the kitchen and ask for a pound of boiling water. This request, it was afterwards learned, made the cook think that the student had suddenly gone crazy.

The fun continued. Betty glanced at her wrist watch occasionally, for Frau Zitterman had requested her to come to the bungalow that evening. She had figured that she would have time both for the initiation frolic and her engagement with the German singer, but time was fast slipping away to the appointed hour. Betty whispered a few words to Bobby and left the room, going directly upstairs for her wraps.

As she passed down, she met Esther on the lower stairway.

"Why, Betty!" gasped the young freshman, "don't you know it's against the rules to go out at this time of night?"

Betty laughed and waved a bit of paper.

"A permit, my child, opens all the doors of Shadyside like magic! Au revoir!"

She sped over the campus with a light heart.

In twenty minutes she was returning more slowly and troubled in spirit, for Frau Zitterman had insisted on giving her the most prominent part in the Pageant—that of Miss America.

Betty was thrilled by the honor one moment, the next she was miserable over the certain knowledge that Ada Nansen would be furious. Her acceptance of the part would mean a public humiliation for Ada, the dethroned queen of song.

From this problem her mind wandered to the mysterious stranger and his queer actions that afternoon.

Was he planning to abduct Ada? Such things did happen. Perhaps Ada should be warned.

"To-morrow's Saturday. I'll see Bob and get his advice," thought Betty.

Her mind somewhat relieved over this decision, she ascended the stairs. Looking back, a strange sight greeted her.

The limp body of Anne Warner clung to the basement banisters. The light from the hall threw a ghastly shade on her ashen face.

"Anne! Anne!" exclaimed Betty sharply.

A low moan answered her.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRUNK-ROOM GHOST

It seemed to Betty Gordon afterwards that she flew through the intervening space.

"Anne! Anne! Are you ill?" Her arms went round the fainting girl.

"A—a ghost—in the trunk room!" gasped the unfortunate freshman.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Betty cheerfully. "There's no such creature! Sit here until I return."

She flew up the steps and moistened her handkerchief at the fountain.

"Here, Anne. This will make you feel better. What were you doing in the trunk room at this time of night?"

The touch of cool water on her face revived the freshman somewhat. She sat up and looked at Betty in a dazed fashion.

"I—I drew a command to sit on the floor of the trunk room in the dark and chant that verse about sitting in the graveyard all alone, only I had to say trunk room."

"I know," remarked Betty, "the one which goes,

" 'I sat in the graveyard
All alone, all alone, all alone,
I heard the tread of fleshless feet,
Fleshless, fleshless, fleshless feet——' "

Anne nodded and shivered.

"It was awfully dark in the trunk room. I succeeded in saying the verse four times and feeling creepier every time, but when I came to the last line— Oh, Betty! a horrible something all in white appeared, gave an awful moan, and floated out the door!" and to Betty's surprise, the practical Anne dissolved into nervous tears.

"Why, Anne! Be your own sensible self! You know there is no such thing as a ghost. It was a courageous thing you had to do and you just imagined the ghost!"

Anne lifted a white, tear-stained face.

"Do I look like a person who imagines things?"

Betty was forced to admit that she did not.

"I tell you something dressed in white went out that door!" maintained Anne stoutly.

"Well, if it did go out it didn't float. It went on two legs."

"I—I didn't stand my test of character very well," sighed Anne wearily. "I—I guess I don't belong here."

Betty's generous heart went out to the lonely girl.

"Anne! Of course you stood your test of character. You were not supposed to be frightened half out of your wits by an apparition. Such things are not allowed. Come, we are compelled to report this to the senior class president."

"Oh, please! Betty! Not to-night. I am all in," begged Anne piteously.

"I'll see you to your room, then I'll report it myself to Thelma Johnson." Prompt action was second nature to the energetic Betty.

It was almost time for lights to go off as she sped through the corridor a few moments later and knocked at the door of the president of the senior class.

Thelma's blue eyes widened with surprise to see Betty.

"Why, come in!" she cried. "Is anything wrong?"

Betty slipped in and sank into a chair.

"You know that trunk-room command?" she began. "Did the command include a ghost as well?"

"A ghost? Of course not! What do you mean?" exclaimed Thelma.

Betty came to the point at once and at the conclusion of her story, Thelma's face was flaming with resentment.

"Of course that was not in the test. Ghosts! The idea! She's either imagined it or some one has played a silly trick to frighten her—and that's strictly against Shadyside rules. It puts the committee and the Mysterious Four in an unfavorable light. I'll find out who did this or know the reason why! Promise that you'll tell me if you find out anything about it."

"I will," said Betty carelessly, never dreaming she would be forced to keep the promise.

"I'll go at once and apologize to Anne," said Thelma.

At that moment, the lights went out and a soft darkness enveloped the two girls.

"Are you there?" whispered Thelma.

"Present!" giggled Betty. "You'll have to put off your apology until morning."

"Yes, but thank you so much, Betty, for coming to me. You did exactly right. You stand for all that is best in Shadyside!"

The warm words sent a glow to Betty's heart as she ran softly down the darkened corridor.

The door of Ada Nansen's room was open and a soft murmur of voices came drifting out into the hall.

Instinctively Betty paused as she heard the voice of Ada Nansen inquire eagerly:

"Did it frighten her much?"

"Frighten? She was frightened half out of

her wits!" Nina Trull was speaking in a very low voice, but it carried well. "I hid behind the furnace-room door until she ran out. It was great fun because I dislike her so heartily. I wouldn't have done it for you, Ada, even if you did get cold feet at the last minute, but I have an old score to settle with Anne Warner."

Betty heard Ruth Gladys Royal giggle. The sound infuriated her. For the moment consequences were forgotten. Impulsively she rushed into the room.

The moonlight streamed in at the window and lighted the startled faces of the three girls. Ada and Ruth Gladys looked thoroughly frightened, but Nina assumed a belligerent pose and exclaimed defiantly:

"And what are you doing snooping around our rooms at this time of night?"

"I was reporting Anne's experience to the senior class president. As you know, such things are not allowed."

"Oh, indeed, Miss Polly Prim?" cried Nina defiantly. "Well, let your report go no further. You could very well have been the ghost yourself, Miss Betty Gordon! I saw you in the lower hall and I'll accuse you if you accuse me."

"But I heard you telling these girls all about it," gasped Betty.

"Oh, no! I am sure your memory is at fault,"

mocked Nina, with a meaning look at Ada and Gladys.

The two weaker wills took their cue from Nina's stronger one and chanted mockingly as if they were learning a lesson:

"Yes! Yes! Your memory is at fault."

Before the amazed and indignant Betty could utter a word, steps were heard coming down the corridor and Ruth Gladys Royal whispered hysterically:

"Miss Martha! The corridor teacher! Go! Nina, go!"

Betty and Nina ran, each scampering under cover of the soft darkness to their different rooms.

Betty hurriedly undressed in the dark and slipped between the cool sheets.

The moonlight fell on the peaceful face of her roommate. Bobby was fast asleep.

"Now things are in a pretty mess!" groaned the distracted girl. "I am in honor bound to report this to the senior class president. If I do, Ada and her gang will sure start on the war path!"

"Well, let them," whispered Self. "Take your revenge in the part of Miss America. Nothing can hurt Ada like losing that part."

A still, small voice whispered:

"Give Ada the part. She has a lovely voice—better trained than yours. If you really wish to

keep on agreeable terms with her, why take that which will publicly humiliate her?"

"But Frau Zitterman says you can sing the part better than Ada. It would be wonderful for you to have the leading rôle in the Pageant. It is quite an event! People come for miles around to witness it. Bob and your Uncle Dick would be so proud!" clamored Self.

The battle waged on and on. Betty groaned in spirit.

Suddenly she sat bolt upright. What was it Uncle Dick had whispered to her at the Shady-side station?

"I put something of value in your trunk, Betty. Whenever you are in trouble or doubt, it may help you."

In the excitement of unpacking, she had forgotten his words and had found nothing in the trunk. What had she overlooked?

She must go to the trunk room to-morrow and see and—oh, dear—she must report Nina Trull as the trunk-room ghost.

Betty fell into fitful slumber.

CHAPTER XII

CAMPUS PLANS

"GUESS the news!" cried red-haired Constance Howard, bursting into Betty's room the next afternoon when the physical training classes were preparing for the rowing contest.

"What's up now?" questioned Bobby. "Oh, dear, where did I put my sweater?"

"Out with the news, Connie!" Libbie and Louise came running from the adjoining room.

"Yes, tell us!" laughed Betty. "I'm as curious as a cat!"

"Miss Prettyman just posted a notice on the bulletin board. We're to have a tennis tournament in the near future."

"Hoorah!" and Bobby threw her soft little felt hat in the air.

"Oh, Connie, how lovely!" exclaimed Betty eagerly. "Of course you will enter?" Betty had almost forgotten her part promise to play Nina Trull.

"Connie will win! She's been playing all summer," drawled Libbie from a comfortable chair.

"Think of it! I'd rather lie in a hammock and read!"

"Of course you would! And get rolls and rolls of fat!" exclaimed Bobby witheringly. "Just like Dora Esterbrooke."

"Every one who plays tennis is compelled to enter for the preliminaries," stated Constance. "And then——"

"And then——" prompted Betty eagerly.

"And then whoever wins in the finals will represent Shadyside and play against Shortridge."

Betty shivered with delight.

"Shortridge won the cup last year! O-oh!"

"Shortridge must not get the cup this year!" exclaimed Constance. The light of battle was in her eye.

"Hist!" Frances warned, poking her head in at the door. "Miss Martha's coming this way. Bedroom inspection!"

"Oh!" shrieked several voices as the girls scampered to their own rooms.

"We didn't expect it so soon," mumbled Constance.

"I've clothes all over the place," Libbie wailed. "I know I'll get a C! Oh, dear!" She disappeared into the adjoining room from whence issued sounds of haste and struggle.

Bobby giggled excitedly.

"Oh, dear! Where can my sweater be?" She peered under the bed.

"Your sweater?" Betty smiled at her friend. "I hung it up in the closet for you!"

Flashing her roommate a grateful look, Bobby entered the large closet just as Miss Martha appeared in the doorway. The teacher's plain face brightened as her eyes wandered over the immaculate room.

"Very nice! Very nice, indeed!" she murmured, and left a card with a huge A printed on it.

"Come out of the closet!" sang Betty gleefully. "We've captured an A, Bobby."

"No thanks to me!" exclaimed the honest Bobby, emerging from the closet with her sweater.

A groan issued from the room on the right.

Betty dimpled. "That's Libbie," she laughed. "I'll bet she's drawn a C!"

"You win the bet!" called Libbie mournfully. "Isn't it just horrid of Miss Martha to come when we least expect her?"

"You'd never be ready, anyway, Libbie, old girl," sang out Bobby, with cousinly candor.

"Well, I'm not ready for that rowing contest, either," grumbled Libbie. "What's the idea, anyway? Saturday's not a school day!"

"But the girls begged Miss Anderson to have it to-day," explained Betty. "It's such fun!"

A groan issued from Libbie's room.

"Fun!"

"Tie 'Ode to the West Wind' to your skiff," called the wicked Bobby, "and perhaps it will waft you to the goal!"

"I'd rather take Ode to the Morning. It's new. Timothy sent it to me yesterday," replied Libbie imperturbably.

The lake was quite deserted. Some of the students had left the campus on week-end parties with friends. The greater number had been issued an "Edentown permit" and they were taking in the movies and the shops of the nearest little town.

As Betty was unfastening her boat from its moorings, Nina Trull approached.

In her dark knickers and bright red sweater, the little brunette presented a striking appearance.

"Just a moment, Miss Gordon," she said authoritatively, and as Betty turned she said in a low voice:

"I'd advise you not to take that little matter of last night any further. If you do, we'll make it hot for you!"

Betty drew herself up and measured Nina with appraising eyes.

The little brunette did not flinch nor weaken. She gave back look for look. A deadly deter-

mination was revealed in the set of her firm chin and the flash of her dark eyes.

"I shall do just exactly what I think best to do," replied Betty calmly. Two pairs of dark eyes clashed like steel on steel. "And you nor any one else can force me to do otherwise."

For a long time their eyes held, then a fleeting look of respect crossed the little brunette's face but she replied quickly and with meaning:

"Well, I advise that you think best to keep quiet," and, turning quickly, she loosened from its moorings the little black boat she had chosen for the race.

"What was Nina whispering to you?" demanded Bobby in a low voice.

"Oh, nothing! Just a little advice," laughed Betty.

She felt it was scarcely right to tell Bobby and her crowd she knew who the trunk-room ghost was until she had reported to Thelma Johnson. Perhaps the senior president would wish the matter hushed up.

The dormitory had been buzzing all morning with the news of Anne's plight of the night before and surmise as to the origin of the ghost.

A few of the superstitious were inclined to believe it was "a genuine haunt," but the great majority of the girls were inclined to think it was

either Anne's imagination or that she was the victim of a practical joke.

Early in the day, Betty had gone to Thelma's room only to find the senior class president had left on an early morning train to spend the weekend at Tarrytown and would not return until time for classes, Monday morning. She had decided to let the matter rest and report to Thelma then.

The Shadyside girls had been very careful not to talk "ghost" before the faculty, fearing closer supervision and a stricter régime.

"Advice?" exclaimed Bobby. "I like her nerve! If you don't beat that girl rowing to-day, I'll duck you in the lake. She's entirely too pleased with herself to suit me!"

"Beat her yourself!" exclaimed Betty gayly. "You and Connie are splendid rowers!"

To Betty's surprise, Connie's face flushed scarlet with pleasure.

In a few minutes the twelve contestants were lined up for the race.

"Now remember, there is to be no crowding," warned Miss Anderson. "Keep at least eight feet from the next boat. "All ready?" There was a moment of silence.

Then the whistle blew and they were off.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BOAT RACE

THE twelve boats shot out over the blue water.

After a moment Betty looked back to see that Libbie and Ada Nansen were left far behind. Ruth Gladys Royal also lagged in the rear with Alice Guerin near by.

Betty, Nina, Norma and Connie were in the lead, rowing steadily.

Slowly, little by little, Norma began to lose.

Now Betty's, Nina's and Connie's boats were bow to bow and stern to stern.

Oh, this was glorious!

Slowly but persistently Connie began to lose to the black and red boats.

Betty was possessed of a very ecstasy of motion. The little red skiff shot out and passed the black one, but Nina kept steadily a boat length behind. The latter's face was white with determination.

Shrill cheers arose from the rear and Betty recognized Bobby's voice. It rose in an encouraging shout:

"Good girl, Betty! Row, Betty! Row!"

Rock Island was near at hand and Betty was almost certain of victory when she felt something cold and wet upon her ankles. Looking down, she gave a startled exclamation. Her boat was slowly filling with water!

Doggedly she pulled on the oars but the water was rising steadily, making the frail craft cumbersome and heavy to manage.

The nose of the black boat appeared at Betty's right and at the same time a little gurgling sound at her feet attracted the girl's attention.

Letting her oars ride for a moment, she put her fingers in a small leak. Quickly she stuffed her handkerchief in the crevice. But now the black skiff was ahead, with Nina pulling steadily.

Shrill cheers from Ada and Ruth Gladys Royal sounded out. Betty bent steadily to the oars and heard Bobby shout encouragingly:

"Betty! Betty! I don't want to duck you!"

A warm little glow crept to Betty's heart. Never had Bobby failed her. She must not fail Bobby.

The little red skiff seemed alive with new-found energy. It shot past Nina Trull's craft and skimmed gracefully over the water to the goal.

The big rock was reached. A shout went up.

"Some finish, I'll say!"

"Betty Gordon wins!"

"Nina Trull was second and Constance Howard third."

"My, how Betty did row!"

"Yes, but why did she rest just before the island was reached?"

"Give it up."

Nina rowed away without a backward glance. Her face was white with anger and disappointment.

"Connie's crying because she didn't make a better showing; what do you know about that?" exclaimed Bobby.

Betty was about to reply when a familiar whistle came singing over the water. She turned quickly and looked out over the lake to where the red brick buildings of Salsette Military Academy loomed sentinellike.

From the opposite bank a boat was putting out. Its occupant waved an oar in salute.

"That's Bob!" exclaimed Bobby, "and he wants you."

"And my boat's gone to the bad! But I guess I can use it a little longer and maybe Bob can fix it."

Bobby promised to explain Betty's sudden departure to Miss Anderson, and Betty rowed away.

"What's up? A boat race?" asked Bob, as his skiff came alongside Betty's boat.

"Yes, but it's all over now. I came very near losing to Nina Trull. My boat sprang a leak!"

"Nina Trull? She's the raven who croaked so on the train!" grinned Bob. "How do you two get along by this time?"

"As Bobby says, 'like poison and milk.' Nina's as bad as Ada—worse, because she's not afraid of anything. Oh, I'm so glad you came, Bob! I'm in a peck of trouble and I want your advice."

"Fire away! I'm strong on advice. Let's row to shore and sit on the bank where your feet can dry."

"Now, out with it!" demanded Bob, as their boats were moored to shore and they were sitting on the soft grass in the mellow fall sunshine, "because I have a tale of woe to pour into your ear!"

"Oh, what is it, Bob?"

"Ladies first," grinned Bob. "Fire away!"

"Well, my tale of woe is in three installments," laughed Betty. "First installment might be headed 'Ghost'; second installment, 'Pageant on the Campus,' and third, 'The Mysterious Man.'"

"Sounds interesting," remarked Bob. "Fire away, Betty!"

Thus encouraged, Betty poured the story of her troubles into Bob Henderson's willing ear.

"Geel!" he exclaimed, "things have been happening at Shadyside as well as Salsette. That Nina Trull is another Jerry Crosley!"

"But what would you do about the ghost, the man and the Pageant?" wailed Betty.

"Of course, since you gave your promise to the senior class president, you are in honor bound to report the little demon regardless of the consequences.

"About the man, I'd do nothing but wait and see if there are any further developments. Probably your fears for Ada are groundless."

"And about the Pageant?" prompted Betty softly.

"That is different. You know, Betty," said Bob, fixing her with a serious but kindly look, "there are some things which we must decide for ourselves. That is one. No one can do it for you. But the gift which Uncle Dick left might help."

"Bob, what was it?" Betty clutched at his blue and gold sleeve. "I must have overlooked mine, and it's still in the trunk somewhere. Please tell me!"

But Bob only smiled mysteriously.

"Wait and see. Mine has helped me to decide a number of things since I came to Salsette." His fine eyes were very grave. "You see, Betty, so many boys want to make the team. All of them can't, and it takes bigness not to be jealous of the other fellow."

"But you made the team! You are on the

eleven! I was wild with joy when I got your note!"

"Yes, of course. I was rather joyous myself! But Jerry Crosley thought he should have been chosen instead and he was very bitter about it. He's made life unpleasant for me ever since. But come—" Bob broke off. "You are dry now. I'll go and take a look at that leaky boat."

A few moments later he looked up from the red skiff and gave a whistle of astonishment.

"Betty, the plot thickens! Some one punctured this boat and stuffed the puncture with gum!"

"Oh, you are joking!"

"No joke about it! Look! This was a small, rotten knot in the wood. Some one has punched it out and filled the hole with gum. Of course, as soon as you began to use it the boat began to leak! What a dirty trick!"

"It's that Nina Trull, probably. I'm going right to her and tell her what I think of her!" flared Betty.

Bob's calm voice had the effect of water upon flame.

"Whoa now, Betty! You're in trouble enough already. I'd advise you to keep still, for this concerns no one but you. I'll scrape away the gum and plug the hole up, and Miss Anderson will think the place rotted out."

"Perhaps you are right," said Betty, after a

moment's reflection. "I don't know what I'd do, Bob, if it were not for you to help me curb my temper! But to think I was such a softie as to want to spare Ada Nansen's feelings about the Pageant! I'll take that part now and just show that crowd a thing or two!"

Bob glanced at the angry girl and smiled a wise smile.

"Perhaps when you see Uncle Dick's gift you'll change your mind. Promise me you'll look at it first. That's all the pay I ask for my bag of advice."

"Of course. But I'm dying with curiosity. I'll go to the trunk room at once!"

"And I must get back over the lake. See you next Saturday; maybe sooner."

Bob's skiff shot out over the lake.

"I wonder what Uncle Dick's gift can be?" puzzled Betty as she made her way over the campus and down into the basement of the dormitory. "If it helps me make decisions when situations are puzzling, then I certainly need it!"

But her curiosity was doomed to disappointment, for the basement rooms were all locked and Dave was nowhere in sight.

"He's off until Monday, too, I suppose!" murmured Betty, as she returned to her room. "I shall have to curb my curiosity until Monday."

But Betty overslept Monday morning and was

unable to get to the furnace room or to see the senior class president before classes.

For the first time she began to think seriously of keeping still about the trunk-room ghost and in the classroom her mind was not on her lessons.

"Mademoiselle Bet-te! Again I ask you, translate page ninety-six. Inattention ees not a desirable!"

Madame Le Foy's voice was tinged with impatience. Betty murmured an apology and stumbled through the long French words.

Madame scolded her volubly and asked Louise to translate the same page.

After Louise had given a brilliant translation, the excitable French woman turned again to Betty. "Mademoiselle Bet-te! Why can you not do eet so? Voilà! Your mind ees a wanderer!"

Betty heard Ada Nansen and Nina Trull giggling maliciously and she was covered with confusion at this public reprimand.

In a moment a note came hurtling through space and settled on Betty's desk.

A quick glance in madame's direction proved the coast was clear for the time being.

She opened the missive and was startled to see a crossbones and skull drawn crudely upon the bit of paper and, underneath the drawing, these words:

"SILENCE. SPEAK AT YOUR PERIL!"

Betty's cheeks flamed with indignation. She looked back quickly. Ada and Nina were studying the ceiling with a vacuous look of extreme innocence.

Like a flash the situation was revealed to her in its true light.

"How dare they think they can intimidate me!" flamed Betty, and reaching for paper and pencil, wrote swiftly:

"Ada: I promised Thelma Johnson I would tell if I found out. I certainly will tell her to-day, regardless of consequences. Hearing your conversation with the other two girls was quite accidental on my part. I'm sorry, but your threats are of no avail."

Betty was folding the note when suddenly Madame Le Foy swooped down upon her, capturing both notes.

CHAPTER XIV

TENNIS AMBITIONS

"MA foil! What we here? A blackmail?" Madame Le Foy cried excitedly. "Mademoiselle Bet-te and Ada, who ees the other two girls?"

No one spoke.

"Voilà! Why ees the silence? Mademoiselle Bet-te. Who ees the other two?"

Betty's face went a little white.

"I cannot say. They should speak for themselves, Madame Le Foy."

"Such a stubbornness!" raved the excitable French woman. "Speak, I tell you! Speak!"

Fortunately for Betty, Ada's sense of honor was not at all strong. She saw no reason why her friends should not bear punishment as well as herself.

"Betty meant Nina and Ruth," she said sullenly.

"Bet-te, Ada, Nina, Ruth! Go to ze principal's office at once! Nevaire I see such a foolishness! Voilà! Ze leetle crossbones and skull. I have a shiver!"

Bobby looked on with puzzled eyes, but gave

her friend an encouraging pat as Betty rose to obey.

Just at that moment the gong sounded for change of classes and the French teacher gathered the four culprits together and marched them down to Mrs. Eustice's office.

The gray-haired principal looked up from a desk as neat and orderly as her own exquisitely groomed person.

"What is it, Madame Le Foy?" she asked quietly. A fleeting look of surprise crossed her beautiful face when her dark eyes rested on Betty Gordon.

"It ees note writing. But nevaire I see such a note. It's blackmail, it ees! Ma foi! Read zeese!" The French teacher thrust the notes into Mrs. Eustice's hand.

"Sit down, Madame Le Foy. Sit down, girls," said Mrs. Eustice pleasantly as she unfolded the two notes.

Utter silence! A pin dropped could have been heard in the room.

After a moment the principal's grave eyes left the notes and settled upon the flushed face of Ada Nansen.

"Ada," she began sorrowfully, "has Shadyside taught you so little that you are satisfied to give warnings by the crude crossbones and skull

method? Explain the meaning of this absurd note at once."

Ada looked thoroughly frightened; so did Ruth Gladys Royal. Of the four girls, Nina Trull alone wore a calm exterior.

"Oh, Mrs. Eustice, it was just a joke!" faltered Ada, and Betty began to wonder how she would fare among these girls who were not noted for their truthfulness, when the door opened and in walked Thelma Johnson with a senior class notice for Mrs. Eustice to bulletin.

As she turned to leave the room Thelma's eyes fell on Betty and she stooped to whisper:

"Have you learned anything concerning the trunk-room ghost?"

"It was Nina Trull," whispered Betty. A great load seemed suddenly to lift from her shoulders. "Mrs. Eustice is trying to get them to tell about it now."

Thelma whirled quickly.

"Mrs. Eustice, this matter of the trunk-room ghost was reported to me at once. May I stay and give my bit of evidence?"

"Trunk-room ghost! I really do not know what you are talking about, Thelma!"

A look of bafflement and wonder crossed the principal's face as she silently handed the two notes to the senior class president. "Perhaps you can throw some light upon this."

"Nevaire I see ze like!" muttered Madame Le Foy excitedly. "Skulls! And ze crossbones! And now ze ghosts! I no like eet!" She crossed herself devoutly.

"Ah!" exclaimed Thelma, handing back the two notes. "Betty found out who the ghost was while I was gone!"

Mrs. Eustice waited, a comic expression of patience on her face. "Explain yourself, Thelma," she said quietly. "I have not met the ghost!"

In a few well chosen words the senior girl obeyed. Mrs. Eustice turned to Betty.

"Now, Betty, please tell me what you know about this," she said gravely.

"She was an eavesdropper, Mrs. Eustice!" cried Ada spitefully. "I think it's too hateful to have people snooping around your rooms, listening to every little thing you say!"

The principal held up a white hand.

"One moment, Ada! Proceed, Betty."

"Please believe me, Mrs. Eustice! What I heard was quite accidental." Betty was almost in tears.

"I believe you," said the principal kindly. "Go on, Betty."

As the tale progressed Mrs. Eustice's eyes grew stern and she turned the weight of their full displeasure upon the three culprits.

"Even after I had promised Thelma to report to her if I learned anything concerning the trunk-room ghost," went on Betty bravely, "I had moments when I was tempted to be silent and not stir up trouble."

The principal's beautiful eyes softened.

"Sometimes it is more courageous to speak than to keep silent, Betty. You did right to answer the note as you did. But what possessed you, Nina, to wish to frighten a freshman and to interfere with the plans of the Mysterious Four?"

"It was Ada's idea," said Nina indifferently. "At the last moment she lacked the nerve to do it, so I volunteered. I think we are making a tempest in a teapot."

"That will do, Nina," said Mrs. Eustice sternly. "And how, may I ask, did you learn of Anne Warner's command?"

"We—we overheard her talking in her room."

Mrs. Eustice raised an eyebrow and the inference was so plain that for the first time, Nina Trull's dark face flushed a rich crimson.

"This ghost episode cannot go unpunished," went on the principal gravely. "I cannot issue you three girls an Edentown permit for three weeks. Superstition of any kind weakens the morale of the school in general, besides being a petty means of tormenting a new girl."

"This is the second time you three girls have

offended all the ideals of Shadyside by your unjust actions toward Anne Warner. I demand that you go to her immediately and apologize, and if I hear of a third offense I shall be forced to expel you. That is all."

The girls filed out of the office; Ada, Nina and Ruth Gladys were in advance, with Betty and Thelma Johnson bringing up the rear.

"I shall get square with that Betty Gordon for this," cried the furious voice of Ada Nansen, "if it takes me all term!"

Nina Trull and Ruth Gladys Royal murmured soft words of sympathy.

"I shall accept the place of Miss America," thought Betty indignantly. "Why should I wish to spare the feelings of a person like that?"

That afternoon Connie Howard came running across the sunlit campus with two tennis rackets in her hand.

"Betty! Betty! Where have you been? Come over to the tennis court. I'll play you two—I've got a new serve I want to try!" Connie's eyes were sparkling with animation. "I feel so snappy to-day that I'm going to lick you to a frazzle," she added.

"Wouldn't doubt that," said Betty ruefully, for Connie played an excellent game of tennis and had beaten her on more than one occasion.

In fact, Betty, Connie, Bobby and Nina Trull

were the junior "crack" players, and even the high and mighty seniors, like Bertha Bromson and Nell Farell, were asking the four juniors for practice games in preparation for house and school tournaments later on.

Nina Trull was an excellent player and had challenged Betty for a match, but so far Betty had avoided the issue.

"But where have you been?" insisted Connie. "Anne Warner came into our unit hunting for you and I left Esther all curled up on your bed reading, but the real hostess had flown."

"I've been down to the bungalow," said Betty, diffidently, a slow flush dyeing her cheek.

"Frau Zitterman's? You're teacher's little pet there. She looks at you as though she thought you were the most wonderful person! You are rather wonderful, Betty. No one knows it better than I!" Connie flashed her such a look of genuine affection that Betty's heart was warmed and touched.

"I'll beat you to the tennis grounds!" cried Connie, and away she went over the campus, shaking her red head in great glee with Betty chasing after her.

For a few moments Connie practiced her new serve and then the two girls began to play in earnest.

Betty was no mean opponent, but after two

losses, 6-4 and 6-2, she threw down her tennis racket and exclaimed:

"Connie, I'm through! You've beaten me again! You stand a good chance to represent Shadyside this year!"

Connie lifted a glowing face to her friend as she picked up the balls.

"Oh, Betty, if I only could! But you haven't played with Nina Trull yet. She's a wonder! She beat me all to pieces the other day. But I had one of my nervous headaches."

The expression on Connie's face told Betty more plainly than words that Connie wished above all things to make the house or school tournaments.

"Well, I hope you and not Nina Trull will represent the junior class," said Betty sincerely.

"Well, pageant week will soon be here!" exclaimed Connie. "I understand the parts are to be given out to-morrow. The house and school tournaments are to be held the same week. How little Connie is going to practice tennis!"

"I am, too," answered Betty sincerely. "But I hope you win the cup for Shadyside this year, Connie!"

CHAPTER XV

BETTY IN THE TRUNK ROOM

"NEWS! News! Latest edition of the Shady-side Gazette!" sang the voice of Bobby Littell, as she came bursting into her room where a number of girls were gathered during study hour.

"Bobby! What is it?" rose a chorus of girlish voices.

The news bearer came smiling into the room and assumed a mysterious pose.

"I know something I won't tell,
Three little niggers in a peanut shell,
It concerns Betty, it concerns me,
It concerns Nina and little Connie,"

she chanted.

"Bobby, you wretch! Out with it!" Betty and Connie threw themselves laughingly upon their friend.

"Oh, do be still," fretted Libbie, "I'm trying my hair a new way." She sat before Betty's mirror, hand glass raised.

"Well, I hope you'll never fix it such a crazy

way as that!" exclaimed the tactless Bobby. She never lost an opportunity to criticize her cousin Libbie.

Libbie worked unconcernedly away.

"Bobby, isn't this supposed to be study hour?" reminded her sister Louise, as she looked up from her book. "Miss Martha will send you to the study hall if you're not careful."

"Oh, piffle!" exclaimed Bobby carelessly. "Who wants to study all the time? To carry the news is so altogether delightful." She eyed her curious listeners with mischief and glee.

"Bobby! Bobby! The news!" they chorused.

"The tournament lists are out!" Bobby's eyes were shining.

Betty noticed that Connie's face went suddenly white.

"And what do you know! Four juniors were chosen for the preliminaries!"

"It concerns Betty, it concerns me!

It concerns Nina and little Connie,"

sang Bobby gleefully and she pranced up and down the room. "Junior victory over all the other classes in tennis. Hoorah!"

Of the three girls concerned, Connie was the most deeply stirred. Two hectic spots appeared on her cheek and her eyes glittered with excitement.

"And to think one of us four will represent Shadyside in the school tournament!" she cried feverishly.

"I'll certainly play hard so that Nina Trull won't get it!" cried blunt Bobby. "Ada and her gang are betting big on Nina!"

The hall clock struck eight and the girls gave a little shriek of pleasure. Books were scarcely put away when Esther came bursting excitedly into Betty's room.

"Girls! Nina Trull was the trunk-room ghost!"

Exclamations and questions began to fly through the air, and Esther told how Mrs. Eustice had forced Nina to apologize to Anne.

"Why, I'd go right to Mrs. Eustice if I were Anne," cried Esther excitedly. "Her apology was positively insulting!"

"Betty Gordon!" exclaimed Bobby. "You've known all about this fracas and didn't cheep. I'll never give you a job as reporter on my Shadyside Gazette."

Betty smiled affectionately at her friend.

"You see, I didn't feel that I should say anything until I talked to Thelma Johnson and then—well, I think Mrs. Eustice would like to hush the matter up."

"Land! Yes!" exclaimed Connie. "If there's much talk about ghosts, Aunt Nancy will be see-

ing 'ha'ants' and we'll get cleansing powder in our biscuits instead of baking powder."

Feeling thirsty, Betty drifted out into the hall to get a drink.

Standing in the deserted corridor the thought of her Uncle Dick's present stowed away in her trunk came to her.

"Now would be a good time to get it," thought Betty. "I could slip down there in a jiffy!"

Dave and George were coming up the basement steps, and as Betty descended she heard the querulous voice of George Buzz exclaiming:

"I told you the lights would go out some day. Just as I expected. I knew it!"

"Oh, Dave!" exclaimed Betty, "please let me have the keys to the trunk room. I'll keep them only a moment!"

"The basement's in darkness, Miss Betty. A fuse has burned out. Maybe you'd better wait until we fix it."

Betty gave an exclamation of dismay. "Oh, Dave, I can't wait. I want something I left in my trunk. Please may I get the keys? I know where you keep them and it's moonlight!"

Dave nodded his shaggy head rather uncertainly and Betty raced down the steps.

The right key clasped tightly in her hand, she groped her way down the hall and entered the darkened trunk room.

Suddenly Betty's heart stood still, then seemed to jump into her throat, for a shadowy something—a shape—floated across the trunk-room floor and disappeared behind a pile of trunks.

With a stifled scream, Betty flew out into the hall.

Everything was still.

"I just imagined something moved," she thought sensibly. "It must have been a shadow."

She could see her trunk quite plainly. Moonlight streamed upon it, but the corners of the room were in darkness.

She slipped quietly over the intervening space and approached the pile of trunks. She was acutely aware of the shadowed room behind her. Every nerve was tense. Not a sound.

Presently there was a stir, a movement in the darkness. Betty's heart began to race with excitement. She looked back and stifled a scream. Surely some one was standing over there in the shadows. She opened her mouth to cry out, but no sound came.

Suddenly there was a slipping, a sliding, a noise of falling trunks, and Betty was hurled to the floor and buried from view!

For a startled moment, she was too stunned to think. As her dazed senses returned, she realized that trunks had fallen all about and over her, wedging her in. She could neither see nor move.

Suddenly from the opposite side of the room came a movement—a rush—a slam! Something had glided across the floor and out into the hall!

Terrified, Betty screamed at the top of her voice.

All was silence. Again she screamed, but only her echo answered.

"I must get out of here," she thought. "Any minute a heavy trunk may fall and crush me."

She stirred uneasily, and with a great clatter a trunk fell off overhead.

Cautiously Betty put a hand upward and felt along the edges of the trunks. Nothing was overhead! If she could only get to her feet! But her dress was caught!

She pulled frantically on her skirt, at the same time calling for help. No one answered.

How long before Dave and George would come back? Perhaps they had to buy a new fuse. What was that horrid something that had moved? Perhaps it would return.

"Nonsense, I mustn't be silly," Betty thought. "I must get out of here before I'm mashed."

She pulled away at her skirt. There was a ripping and tearing of cloth and she knew her dress was free. Now to get to her feet. There was not enough space. Her heart sank but she leaned heavily against the trunk on her right and pushed cautiously. It gave slightly.

Betty knew that a big pile of trunks was behind her and expected any minute one of them would fall.

She leaned heavily to the left. The trunk gave slightly. She was able to stand.

The moonlight cast a white sheath of silver light upon the fallen trunks.

Betty started to climb out over them and was suddenly aware of footsteps coming down the hall. That "something" she had heard, returning!

Common sense came to her aid. It was the voice of Bobby Littell lustily calling her name.

"Here! Present!" called Betty, and climbed out over the fallen trunks.

Excitement reigned. Her chums came pouring into the room, every one talking at once.

"Betty, what happened?" cried Bobby. "What are you doing down here? You stayed so long we came to hunt for you. Dave told us where you were!"

The uproar brought Dave and George running. The basement was crowded with girls.

"What is it, Miss Betty?" gasped Dave, as he turned on a switch and flooded the outer basement with light.

For the dozenth time, Betty explained. She was a sorry sight. Her dress was torn, her arm bleeding, and her face and clothes dirty.

"And I tell you somebody was prowling around in this room, Dave!" she ended. "I heard 'em leave!"

"There's a ghost in the trunk room!" some one whispered in a frightened voice. "It wasn't Ada this time."

Ada Nansen laughed scornfully.

"Ghost nothing! It's only Betty Gordon seeking a little notoriety! I hope you're pleased with the uproar you've caused!"

"Anne Warner was snooping around this trunk room to-day!" suddenly exclaimed Nina Trull. "I saw her come out of here!"

Betty turned to Anne and was amazed to see the freshman turn deadly pale. Her hands trembled.

That night long after Bobby was asleep, Betty lay thinking. Whom had she heard in the trunk room? And why was this person so stealthy in his movements? It was a mystery!

Her eyes strayed to the wall where hung Uncle Dick's gift. She had found it in the trunk lid.

The gift was really a double one. There was a hand-colored photograph of Mr. Gordon which Betty had longed to possess for some time. It showed the kindly face at its best and made the girl want to hug it to her heart. She wouldn't be so lonely now—at times—with that face so close at hand.

Beside the photograph, hung by a dainty ribbon, was a copy of Kipling's poem, "If." The beautifully printed words were framed in blue and gold. On the bottom Uncle Dick had written: "True, every word."

Betty got out of bed and read the poem through slowly, then read it again.

"If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you——

Yours is the world and everything that's in it——"

After having read the poem a second time Betty sat very quiet. Then slowly her gaze turned to the photograph of her uncle.

"I guess I understand, Uncle Dick," she whispered. "And it's going to help a whole lot."

Then Betty crept into bed and was soon asleep, untroubled by ghosts or pageants.

CHAPTER XVI

BETTY IN DIFFICULTIES

THE next day was not a peaceful one for Betty Gordon.

In the first place, Frau Zitterman had scant patience when crossed in any of her pet schemes.

When Betty quietly but firmly refused the part of Miss America, stating her reasons, the German singer's nerves went all to pieces. A most unpleasant scene followed and Betty was not surprised to receive, directly after school hours, a summons to Mrs. Eustice's office.

The principal was alone and looked up with a smile as Betty entered.

"I think you know what I wish to talk about," she said kindly, motioning toward a chair. "My friend, Frau Zitterman, is much put out because you have refused the part of Miss America. Please tell me just how you feel about it."

"Oh, Mrs. Eustice, surely I did right!" exclaimed Betty. "I would enjoy the honor," she admitted; "but, whatever my possibilities, Ada Nansen certainly has the lovelier voice now. The part is so much more important than any of the

other rôles, it seems a shame for any one to have it but Ada. You know Ada's voice has reigned supreme at Shadyside. She has justly been proud of the fact, and I can see no really good reason to humiliate her by giving it to another."

For a moment Mrs. Eustice was silent. Then she said slowly:

"I am going to be very frank with you. What I say is strictly confidential. I know you can be trusted. When Frau Zitterman first proposed your name for the part of Miss America, I was surprised and said much the same as you have said in favor of Ada, but Frau Zitterman told me that Ada has had frequent spells of tonsillitis this summer.

"An eminent physician insisted on removing her tonsils. Ada would not agree, fearing the loss of her voice. You know Frau Zitterman has trained Ada for years, but claims that, as a pupil, Ada was neither dependable nor hard working, so at last she refused to train her.

"This caused a great unpleasantness between the two families. Frau Zitterman does not wish to train Ada for the part of Miss America, claiming that she may disappoint us at the last." Mrs. Eustice paused and fixed her beautiful, troubled eyes upon Betty's face.

"This would be fatal to our plans. If Shadyside can successfully put over this Pageant on the

campus, it will be a great drawing card for the school. We are busy having circulars printed now. People will come for miles around. Pageant Week will come during the week that all the house and school tournaments will be held. I am especially eager this year for Shadyside to win the tennis cup as well as honors in all the other athletics.

"But to return to the Patriotic Pageant. Frau Zitterman insists that you have a voice that will be far superior to Ada's in time—if you work hard. And she says you are quite dependable and that your voice will not play 'monkey tricks.' " Mrs. Eustice smiled faintly, but Betty could see that she was greatly worried. "Don't you think that under the circumstances, for the good of Shadyside, you should take the part?"

"No, Mrs. Eustice, I do not," answered Betty bravely. "You know that Ada will be furious if she does not get the part. It will be a public humiliation for her. Her voice is more musical than mine. How can any one know she'll get tonsillitis and disappoint us?"

"Another thing, Mrs. Eustice. I made a resolve to try to get along with Ada this year, but somehow the term has started wrong. She made me so very angry about a number of things," acknowledged Betty, "that I thought I'd take the part of Miss America just to spite her. But

something made me decide to be bigger than that. I can't take the part away from Ada, Mrs. Eustice. I can't and feel right inside about it. But I'll gladly learn her part and my own so that I can substitute if she should be unable to sing."

A look of vast relief swept across the principal's face.

"The very thing! That is best for all concerned!" Then she looked up and said earnestly: "But the extra work! It will be heavy for you."

"Oh, no. I memorize quickly and Frau Zitterman has been running through the music with me. I shall be glad to do it!"

The principal arose and held out her hand.

"How can I ever thank you? You have shown a fine spirit, Betty. You are growing in more ways than one. But what—may I ask—decided you to refuse the rôle?"

"Kipling's 'If,' " said Betty, and laughed merrily.

A strange expression crossed the beautiful face of Mrs. Eustice.

"Uncle Dick gave it to me," explained Betty. "He said it might help me to make decisions."

The gray-haired principal crossed to her desk and unlocked a certain drawer.

"Come here a moment," she said, and her voice was almost a whisper.

Betty obeyed. In the little drawer lay Kipling's "If." It was an exact copy of the one on the wall of Betty's room.

"For years I have kept it here," acknowledged Mrs. Eustice. "If we live up to that, dear child, we can never be little or petty."

Betty felt the tears sting her eyelids. She was deeply stirred by this intimate glimpse into the heart of a fine woman.

Mrs. Eustice locked the drawer and turned briskly to Betty.

"I want to thank you again for the fine spirit you have shown. Under similar circumstances most girls would have been glad to have taken the part of Miss America. I am sure, for the good of the school, Frau Zitterman will, in the future, overlook any unpleasantness she may have with Ada."

"I am so glad you understand me about this," ventured Betty affectionately. "There are so many other things in which I am interested, you know. I'm going in rather strong for athletics this year."

The principal's face lighted up with enthusiasm.

"You're doing splendid work. I am delighted with the juniors' record in tennis. Win the cup for us this year, Betty. You can do it!"

The encouraging words stirred Betty to greater

effort on the tennis field. That afternoon, for the first time in days, she won in a match against Connie.

"Gee, Betty!" exclaimed her chum ruefully, "you're getting better every day. You beat me all to pieces!"

"Betty Gordon, I dare you to play a couple of sets with me," sang out Nina Trull, coming into the tennis court with racket and balls.

Something in the determined set of Nina's chin made a perverse imp dance inside of Betty.

"Thank you," she answered demurely, "but I can't. I'm going to Frau Zitterman's now."

Nina stared. Her cheeks grew scarlet.

"Betty Gordon, you've been avoiding me for weeks!" she flamed. "You're afraid to stand up and take a whipping. That's what is the matter with you! But you can't escape me in the house tournament. I'll give you such a whipping you'll never want to show your face at Shadyside again!"

"Oh, no doubt you will win," laughed Betty pleasantly. "But that kind of a whipping won't hurt me. I'll try just a little harder the next time!"

Nina gasped. Her mouth flew open. Words failed her.

"Oh," giggled Connie, as the two girls went strolling back over the campus, "she gets so

furious because she can't excite you or manage you!"

"She does excite me—inside," admitted Betty. "But I wouldn't let her know it for worlds."

A few moments later, Connie went to the gymnasium to practice and Betty ran across the campus to Frau Zitterman's bungalow.

The maid informed her that the singer had one of her nervous headaches and was unable to give lessons or see any one that afternoon.

Betty went slowly back over the campus, wondering just what she would do.

"Bobby's practicing on the lake," she thought. "I'll join her and we'll have a boat race."

She sped quickly over the velvety grass, looking for her chum's familiar figure in one of the many boats which studded the lake. She was surprised to see Bobby pulling sturdily for shore.

"What's the idea?" called Betty. "I wanted to have a boat race with you."

"Letters!" panted Bobby. "The folks at home have threatened me with disinheritance if they don't hear from me at once, and I forgot all about writing the letter."

Betty's merry laugh rang out.

"Well, come on. I'll race with you to the dormitory. I've owed Uncle Dick a letter for ages!"

Bobby tied the skiff securely and the two girls

sped back over the campus and up to their rooms.

"Now, we'll have a regular letter-writing spree!" laughed Bobby, and opened the door for Betty to enter.

An exclamation of astonishment escaped Betty Gordon's lips as she stepped into the usually immaculately kept room.

Ada Nansen and Nina Trull lifted flushed faces from the floor where they had just dumped the contents of a dresser drawer. Beds were disarranged and clothes had been brought from the closet and thrown untidily over every available chair. Chaos and disorder reigned.

For a moment Betty was speechless with amazement, then indignation seized her.

"Ada Nansen! Nina Trull!" she cried sharply. "What do you mean by mussing up our room like this?"

"Oh," cried Bobby wrathfully, pushing past her friend, "I can tell you! They know it's time for bedroom inspection again and they don't want us to capture an A because they can't get one themselves!"

The two culprits for once had a shamed expression on their flushed faces.

"Nina knew I was going to the bungalow," thought Betty quickly, "and she knew Bobby was practicing on the lake. They thought the coast

was clear for a few minutes. How little and spiteful!"

"We'll leave you now to your letter writing," sneered Nina Trull, recovering her self-possession, "and to your nice, orderly room."

Her chin went up. With an air of maddening assurance, she walked toward the door followed by the frightened Ada.

Betty closed the door and put her back against it.

"Oh, no, you don't!" she exclaimed quietly but with deadly earnestness. "You don't get out of this room until you have straightened it—every bit of it!"

CHAPTER XVII

BETTY WARNS ADA

ADA NANSEN looked more frightened than ever, but Nina Trull only laughed.

"How do you think you can make me?" she sneered.

"Suit yourself," said Betty quietly. "As I closed the door I saw Miss Martha coming up the stairs. She may be here at any minute. If you'll put our things back, I will not report you; otherwise I will call her. I will not have any one interfering with my own private room."

"Get out of the way, Betty!" cried Bobby impulsively. "I'm going to call Miss Martha!"

"Oh, don't, please don't!" begged Ada, in a frightened whisper. "They'll expel us! We'll put your things back, won't we, Nina?"

Nina Trull's dark face hardened.

"I'd not care a rap if I were expelled, except that I'd have no place to go!" she declared bitterly.

"Oh, Nina! Please! If I should be expelled, my people would never get over it. Hurry! Miss Martha may come at any minute. Please!"

Nina turned and, with a furious glance at Betty, began to arrange the day beds.

For several minutes the two girls worked steadily, straightening the untidy place, then the door of the adjoining room was opened and footsteps approached.

"Miss Martha!" gasped Ada, almost in tears. "We are ruined!"

But it was only Constance Howard. She stuck her red head into the door of Betty's room and her eyes widened as they took in the scene.

"The cat's pajamas!" she cried slangily. "What's going on in here?"

"Just some more little, smart tricks of Ada Nansen and Nina Trull!" flamed Bobby angrily. "We caught them mussing up our rooms!"

Connie's eyes traveled from the two culprits, who were working steadily away, to the determined face of Betty Gordon, and she began to laugh. Her eyes danced with mischief.

"Go to it, Betty!" she exclaimed gleefully. "You're a dandy little slave driver! Speed up, Ada! Speed up, Nina! or she'll give you a cut in wages!"

"Oh, hush!" whimpered Ada nervously. She began to cry.

Nina Trull's face was a study in conflicting emotions. To her proud, domineering nature, ridicule was the last straw.

To add to her confusion, Norma and Alice Guerin knocked for admittance, and, as they entered the room, explanations were made all over again.

Like Connie, Norma could not resist a little fun at the enemy's expense. Ada and Nina were furious. At last Nina faced Betty angrily.

"Does the room suit you? You can use force now, Betty Gordon, but there's a time coming when I'll use it and you'll feel it, let me tell you!"

"She means the tennis match!" giggled Norma, and Connie's eyes began to dance.

"Don't threaten, Nina," teased Connie. "You know there's many a slip 'twixt you and the tennis cup!"

"The room is all right—now," said Betty. "In the future, you girls keep out of our room unless you're courting trouble!"

If looks could have killed, Betty Gordon would have dropped dead on the spot, but Ada and Nina were glad to make their escape from the laughter of Betty's friends.

The following day the notice for Pageant Week was posted on the large bulletin board near the dining room entrance. A crowd of interested girls collected around it.

"The Pageant's only three weeks away!"

gasped Thelma Johnson, president of the senior class. "There are dozens of committees to organize! Every girl in Shadyside will have to work like a beaver to put it over."

"Oh, I don't see why they put it on at all!" fretted the leisure-loving Libbie. Her voice rose in a wail. "I've failed in math this month! What shall I do!"

"Study!" cried Bobby sharply. "And don't cram your head with an 'Ode to the East Wind!'"

"Is the tennis match bulletined?" asked Connie, straining forward to see the bulletin board more closely.

"Yes," answered Edith Ames resentfully, "it's there. You juniors have all the tennis honors this year! It isn't fair!"

"Two weeks!" cried Esther Littell. "It's slated two weeks from now, Betty."

"The house preliminaries are always a week before the school tournament," explained Betty, turning to Esther.

The latter gave a little squeal of delight.

"Look! Anne is chosen to represent the freshmen in the rowing contest!"

"Who contests against her?" asked Frances Martin, straining her near-sighted eyes for a clearer view of the bulletin board.

Freshman	Anne Warner.
Sophomore	Phyllis Dugan.
Junior	Nina Trull.
Senior	Thelma Johnson.

The victor to represent Shadyside and play against Shortridge.

"Whoop-a-la!" cried Esther gayly. "Hurrah for dear old Anne!"

"What's Ada Nansen and her crowd looking so pleased about?" demanded Norma Guerin suddenly.

Nina Trull and Ruth Gladys Royal passed smilingly by. Their arms were flung around the exultant figure of Ada Nansen.

"Hurrah for Miss America!" cried Nina, looking insolently into Betty Gordon's eyes. "I know another person who'd have been mighty glad to have gotten it, if she could!"

But the rude words did not trouble Betty much. She knew they were not true.

The lovely weather continued and the plans for the Pageant went merrily on.

Aside from the time spent in classes and in Frau Zitterman's cottage, Betty spent every available moment on the campus.

Her tennis showed such a marked improvement that Miss Anderson declared it was hard to prophesy who, among the four junior girls, would represent the school in the tennis tournament.

Betty had also qualified as a sub on the basket ball team. All of this outdoor life was leaving its mark on the growing girl. Bobby declared that her friend grew prettier every day.

It was after an extra basket ball practice on Saturday afternoon that Betty sped happily over the campus to Frau Zitterman's bungalow.

The singer exclaimed with pleasure.

"Ach! Fräulein Betty! A sight for mine eyes! I haf fretted mid dat Ada. I am but crazy!"

Frau Zitterman was a woman of strong likes and dislikes. She disliked Ada and loved Betty.

Naturally impatient, she abounded in patience where Betty was concerned. To the young girl, it was a never ending source of wonder.

Faithfully, the celebrated singer coached her for both the part of Martha Washington and Miss America and faithfully Betty fulfilled every demand Frau Zitterman put upon her.

"Ach!" exclaimed the singer on more than one occasion, "der voice grows."

It was getting dusk when Betty returned to school for Frau Zitterman had kept her rather later than usual.

Her feet had scarcely touched the grounds of the campus when the bungalow door was thrown open and the German singer called out across the intervening space.

"Fräulein Betty! Return! Der telephone! Some one wishes to talk mit you!"

Wondering, Betty obeyed. It was Bob!

"Don't you think I'm a good detective?" he teased. "I've traced you to the bungalow. Why don't you stay at home on Saturday afternoon? You've had a caller."

"Oh, Bob! I'm so sorry! I had so much to tell you, too!"

"Same here. I've wonderful news. Colonel Halsted has promised to write Mrs. Eustice and invite the Shadyside girls over for the big football game with Northampton!"

"Bob. Oh, I know she'll let us come, she's so nice!"

"Don't do anything to get in her bad books," admonished Bob. Betty laughed at the note of anxiety which crept over the wire. "Say, Betty, listen! This is what I really called you about. I saw that fellow again—you know, the one we talked about. He's on your side of the lake. Watch for him."

"Oh, Bob! Did you really see him again?"

"Yes, I don't like his actions. You'd better tell Ada about him, Betty. I'm afraid he means mischief."

A few moments later Betty was flying back over the campus. She was troubled. Should she warn the hateful girl? She shrank inexpressibly from

the ordeal, for Ada had scarcely spoken to her since the day she had mussed Betty's room and had been forced by Betty to straighten it.

Ada also exulted openly over the part of Miss America and had bragged that the coming Pageant would be a failure without her voice.

Back of the gymnasium were some tall Lombardy poplars. As Betty sped over the soft grass, she was startled to see two figures darkly outlined against the trees.

She ran on unobserved. But as she reached the gymnasium, she turned and looked back. From this angle, she could see the figures more clearly.

It was the mysterious stranger and a girl! Was it Ada?

As Betty lingered in the shadow of the gymnasium, an unmistakable sob reached her ear. The girl was crying, but Betty heard the muffled words.

"I—I can't! Don't ask me again!"

The man muttered something and slunk away.

The girl turned and fled back toward the dormitory.

Betty followed softly, a short distance behind.

How foolish of Ada to permit an interview at night. It was strictly against the rules. What had the mysterious stranger been begging her to do?

Oh! Ada was making for the administration building! She could enter here, and pass over the connecting corridor to the dormitory with less danger of being caught.

Feeling like a sleuth, Betty followed. There was no doubt in her mind now. She must warn Ada against this man!

The girl was entering the lighted hall as Betty reached the steps of the administration building.

"It was Anne Warner! Anne, of all people!" she gasped.

Betty was stupefied with amazement. Wild thoughts raced through her brain.

Was Anne seeking to avenge herself for Ada's slights? Quiet, dependable Anne. The idea was absurd!

Betty's brain was in a whirl. What should she do?

"I'll confide in Alice," she decided. "Alice is always just."

But Alice was not in her room, so Betty decided to be quiet about Anne Warner and speak to the freshman privately.

"But I must warn Ada. Bob said I should," thought Betty miserably, as she sped down the corridor and knocked at Ada's door.

Ada opened the door. She was clad in a silk kimono, and her eyes grew stormy at sight of Betty.

"Ada!" stammered Betty. "I've come to warn you! I—"

"I'm not afraid of you!" exclaimed Ada wrathfully. "I don't want you in my room any more than you want me in yours. Get out!"

"Hurrah for you, Ada," called the voice of Nina Trull, and the little brunette came to the side of her friend. She was followed by Ruth Gladys Royal, who stared at Betty insolently.

"You must listen, Ada. I'm not threatening you! Listen!"

Betty poured out the story of the queer man's action on the train, his remarks in Washington to Ada's father, his prowlings around Shadyside. Everything was disclosed except her night's adventure with Anne and the mysterious stranger.

As the story progressed, Ada looked disturbed, especially when Betty told of the angry talk between her father and the stranger, but at its conclusion she exclaimed angrily:

"Betty Gordon, you just go back where you came from and quit meddling. I can take care of myself! I won't let you play any tricks on me!"

The door was slammed violently in Betty's face.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TENNIS MATCH

"WELL, that's that!" thought Betty. "I've done what I could to warn Ada. Now I must see Anne."

Anne Warner was alone when Betty knocked for admittance. As the freshman opened the door of her room, Betty observed that her eyes were red with weeping.

"Why, hello, Betty. Come in!" said Anne, endeavoring to smile.

"I have but a moment, Anne. I—I saw you to-night out on the campus talking to a man, and I thought you—you might tell me who he was!"

To Betty's surprise, Anne's face turned ghastly. She leaned against the wall for support.

"You saw me? You saw me?" she gasped.

"Yes, and, oh, Anne, don't think I'm meddling—but don't let him coax you into harming Ada Nansen. Who is he? Won't you tell me all about it? Please believe that it is not idle curiosity and that I am truly your friend."

"Harm Ada Nansen! What do you mean?" The freshman looked panic-stricken.

Betty quickly related what she knew about the mysterious stranger and her fears for Ada's safety.

"And now, Anne," said Betty earnestly, "if he is trying to drag you into this, please tell me all and I will see what I can do to help. Did you get a permit to leave the building last night?"

"No," answered Anne honestly, and gave Betty a look of abject misery. "Please do not report me, Betty. I can't explain but—I—I had to do it!"

"Anne! Of course I will not report you. It isn't my business to, but don't pay any attention to that man. I don't trust him!"

Anne gave a hopeless intake of the breath and turned away.

"You don't understand. I'm sorry, Betty, but I can tell you nothing," she murmured.

"Anne, promise me you'll not be drawn into any plot against Ada. It does concern Ada, doesn't it?"

The freshman looked at Betty with miserable eyes but her lips refused to open.

"Promise me you'll not consent to harm Ada," insisted Betty. "Oh, Anne, it never pays."

A strange expression passed over the freshman's face.

"I will not harm Ada any more than she has already harmed me," she said quietly.

What an enigmatical speech!

Betty thought about it many times in the days that followed. What had Anne meant? How mysteriously she had acted! Was she plotting with the mysterious stranger against Ada? If she were, she had been forced into it! Of that Betty was certain.

She had grown to love the quiet, dependable freshman who was forced to wait on table and do typewriting for her tuition. Betty had always admired the quiet dignity with which Anne had performed her tasks.

The queer stranger! Ada! Now Anne! What did it all mean? What did the strange something in the trunk room mean? It was indeed a mystery.

And the mystery deepened as the busy days went by and athletic activities and Pageant practice continued on the campus.

The day of the tennis match which was to decide the tennis representative for Shadyside dawned bright and beautiful.

Never had Betty Gordon felt better. She had spent a refreshing night of dreamless sleep, but Connie confessed to a sleepless night.

"I think I am developing nerves!" she exclaimed impatiently after school hours were over. "I just couldn't go to sleep last night for thinking about the game. Then my head began to

ache. It aches yet. I'm in miserable shape to play!"

Betty and Bobby looked worried. In their hearts they had depended on Connie to beat Nina Trull.

"I'll get you some headache medicine," offered Betty. "This is an extreme case. Perhaps your head will feel better when we get out in the air."

Row after row of camp chairs surrounded the tennis court and these were filled to overflowing with Shadyside students as the four girls took their places on the tennis court.

"All the faculty is out," giggled Connie nervously, and Betty was surprised to see that Connie's hand trembled when she reached for her tennis racquet.

According to Miss Anderson's arrangements, Betty and Connie were to play against each other first, then Bobby and Nina. The victors from these two games were to play a final game which should decide who would be the Shadyside representative in the school tournament to be held during Pageant Week.

Betty looked out over the campus. Never had the grounds looked lovelier!

Perhaps it was the spirit of the beautiful fall day or the encouragement of the many onlookers, but some elf seemed to take possession of Betty. She played as she had never played before, throw-

ing herself into the game with so much enthusiasm, such fleet-footed nimbleness, that the nervous Connie could not reach her balls. The game went to Betty, Miss Anderson shook hands with Betty warmly and exclaimed, as a burst of applause came from the camp chairs:

"Fine! Fine! Girls, I'm proud of you!"

"Miserable, on my part," said Connie in disgust and, try as she would, she could not keep the disappointment from her voice.

"Oh, Connie, it was your head!" exclaimed the generous Betty. "You did not feel well enough to play!"

"No doubt it was my head—or lack of it," said Connie bitterly, and, giving Betty a cool look, turned and was lost among the crowd.

Deserted by Connie when she needed her most! What did the tennis game mean to her in comparison to Connie's friendship? Nothing!

"Bobby would never have felt that way!" thought Betty quickly but she silenced the disloyal thought.

She watched with listless eyes as Bobby and Nina Trull took their positions on the court, but her thoughts were with Connie.

After a few minutes, Betty realized that Bobby was putting up a stiff game, but she was no match for the nimble Nina Trull. To Betty's dismay, Bobby began to lose steadily.

It was no surprise to the Shadyside students when Miss Anderson called:

"Game in favor of Nina Trull." The score was 6—4.

Again a storm of applause went up, and Betty realized it was her fate to play against Nina.

Bobby came flying to meet her.

"Beat her, Betty!" she cried excitedly. "You can do it if you try. I did my best but I am no match for her."

"I'm sorry, Bobby!" said Betty quietly.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded the blunt Bobby. "Your pep's all gone! You look as if you had lost the last friend you ever had!"

"I have lost one, I guess." Try as she would, Betty could not keep the tears from her voice.

"What's up?"

"Connie's angry because——"

"Nonsense! Where is she?" Bobby looked wildly around. "Have some sense, Betty Gordon! Don't dare flunk at the last minute and let that miserable little Nina Trull represent Shadyside. Go in to win or I'll—I'll——" Bobby was almost in tears.

What dire threat she was going to make was never revealed, for Miss Anderson hurried Betty into the tennis court where Nina was waiting.

"You can't escape me now, Miss Betty Gordon," exulted Nina, with cool assurance. "I'll

have you looking like thirty cents when this game is over!"

The rude, uncourteous words partially restored Betty's self-possession, but she continued to think of Connie's surprising action as the white ball went back and forth between Nina and herself.

Nina was doing some spectacular playing and as Betty's mind continued to dwell upon Connie, she failed to catch the ball as Nina sent it spinning over the court.

A cheer went up from Nina's crowd.

A deep discouragement settled over Betty. Oh, well, what was the difference? If she, like Connie, failed, then her friend could no longer feel hurt toward her. What was a tennis game to Connie's friendship?

A second time Betty failed to catch the ball.

Then suddenly a slender red-haired figure came flying over the intervening space between spectators and tennis court. It was Connie.

She had seized a megaphone from the yell leader and now she raised it to her lips, shouting excitedly:

"Betty! Betty! Fight for Shadyside! Lick her! Drag her out! Win for Shadyside!"

Betty gave a little sob of joy and responded to the enthusiastic words. Of course Shadyside must come first in her thoughts. Fragments of Kipling's "If" returned to uphold her.

The last set went rapidly, for Betty was playing better than she had ever played in her life. The white ball began to fly back and forth in steady interesting playing. Betty held her own.

And now Betty was beginning to learn the secrets of Nina's play, service and defense. When Nina's elbow went up the ball came over one way, when her left hand went flat the ball came another; and her defense seemed limited to three or four movements.

"I'll outguess her—I've got to outguess her," thought Betty, as she caught a "wild one" and sent it back like lightning. "She shan't win—she shan't!"

From then on her defense strengthened and her delivery became truly wonderful. She was here, there and everywhere over the clay court. Her movements began to bewilder Nina, and she missed—and then missed again.

"Go to it, Betty!" sang out Bobby. "You've got her scalp!"

Unable to make Betty lose, Nina lost her temper and her head as well. She began to play wildly.

Betty kept her self-possession and played steadily on.

A few moments later the game came to an end with a score of 6-3 in favor of Betty.

Nina Trull threw down her tennis racquet and,

in full view of the spectators, stamped upon it. Her face was full of rage and disappointment.

Bedlam broke loose. The band began to play "Shadyside" and Betty was borne triumphantly across the campus on the shoulders of laughing friends.

The Shadyside students shouted exultantly:

"Hurrah for Betty Gordon! Shadyside's representative in the tennis tournament! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

CHAPTER XIX

A MIDNIGHT CELEBRATION

"My! I never was so excited in my life," acknowledged Constance Howard.

The girls had gathered after study hour in Betty Gordon's room to talk over the tennis match.

"I was awfully peeved because I played so wretchedly; but when I saw Betty losing to that miserable little Nina Trull I just simply went wild!"

"I never would have won if you hadn't yelled that at me, Connie," acknowledged Betty happily.

"And you never would have played badly if I hadn't snapped at you. Bobby put me in my place. She came at me like a fury, demanding that I yell encouragement to you."

Betty threw Bobby a quick glance of gratitude.

"It was what saved the day. Although I might not have won, anyway, if Nina hadn't lost her temper. She's a fine player."

"I wonder who feels like thirty cents now,"

giggled Bobby wickedly. "The trouble with her is she is too sure of herself."

"Let's have a midnight supper and celebrate the occasion," suggested Frances eagerly. "We can get our crowd together and I can use my new tea set. I have some excellent orange pekoe."

"Strictly against the rules," said Betty dimpling, but an imp of mischief began to dance in her brown eyes.

"The very thing!" exclaimed Bobby. "I feel that I shall burst with joy unless I celebrate this auspicious occasion."

"I've got a quarter's worth of cookies in my room and a box of chocolates Timothy sent me," acknowledged Libbie.

"And I've got a bottle of pickles, two loaves of bread and some dope to make sandwiches with," announced Connie triumphantly. "I'm bent on a celebration."

"But suppose Miss Martha should catch us?" suggested Louise quietly.

"Oh, piffle! Don't be a wet blanket, Louise. Miss Martha sleeps at the end of the corridor. We must be willing to run the risk. I simply can't go to sleep to-night."

"Well, come on," said Frances to Connie, "let's whisper the glad news around and meet in Esther's room at eleven o'clock, then come here."

At last the "lights out" bell rang and silence descended on Shadyside.

Promptly at eleven o'clock nine shadowy, kimono-clad figures crept stealthily, in Indian file, through the darkened door of Betty's room. They were loaded down with sofa pillows, mugs, and various food supplies.

"Are you all here?" said Betty in a sepulchral whisper. "Turn on the light, somebody, I want to see you!"

"Be cautious, my child!" admonished Connie. "Let's raise the shades! Remember Miss Martha."

Soft giggles from the conspirators!

"How are we ever going to make the sandwiches without a flashlight?" demanded Bobby.

"I have one," giggled Esther. "Anne has one too!"

"Turn it on a minute!" requested Betty. "Who wants to cut the bread?"

"I do," said Connie modestly. "Hand it over! No one can make sandwiches like little Connie."

"I'll get my hot plate ready to boil the water and I'll make the tea," offered Betty. "Come, on, Anne, and hold your flashlight for me."

Suddenly a step was heard coming down the corridor. Instantly two flashlights went off and ten girlish figures straightened tensely. Unnatural silence reigned in Betty Gordon's room.

The footsteps passed.

"False alarm!" giggled Norma. "Who brought the bread knife, anyway?"

"I did—at least I meant to!" This from Libbie.

She had forgotten it!

A stifled groan went up from nine throats.

"I told you to bring one, Libbie!" groaned Connie.

"I know; but I must have forgotten it."

"Some one will have to go down to the kitchen and get one," declared Esther, who was getting quite a thrill out of her first "midnight supper."

"I'll go," offered Betty, and was out of the door before any one could remonstrate.

She sped silently through the darkened, deserted hall and down into Aunt Nancy's spotless kitchen.

She soon found a bread knife and returned to the lower hall.

Was it fancy or did she hear a movement in the basement? She peered over the banisters. It seemed to come from the trunk room!

A shiver went down Betty's spine and she ran swiftly up the stairs to the bedrooms above.

Strangely enough, she had a feeling that something was following her. She peered backward into the darkness. All was silence.

"Have you the bread knife?" whispered the

conspirators as Betty slipped softly into the room and locked the door after her.

"Eureka!" she whispered gayly.

The preparations went merrily on. Packages were cautiously unwrapped. Sandwiches were made, pickle bottles were opened and tea was drawn.

"Oh, isn't this fun!" exclaimed Esther in a stage whisper. "It's almost as much fun as having Betty beat Nina Trull!"

"I'll put the story of this night in my Memory Book and keep it forever," sighed romantic Libbie.

"Wish we could dance," giggled Frances. That's all this party lacks," and she handed out the mugs filled with tea and lemon.

Smothered exclamations of delight as the kimono-clad figures sank to the floor for their feast!

"A toast! A toast!" exclaimed Bobby in a stage whisper. "Here's to Betty Gordon. Long may she live to wrest the tennis cup from Short-ridge!"

The subdued clink of mugs sounded as every one responded.

"These are the spiffiest sandwiches I ever tasted," remarked Norma appreciatively. "Get over, Alice. You're taking all my sofa pillow."

"Thought I was on my own," laughed Alice softly.

"O-oh! Somebody's dropping tea down my neck!" shrilled Libbie suddenly.

"Hush! You'll have Miss Martha on the war-path," warned Bobby.

Every one began to giggle.

"I'm ready for dessert," announced Connie in a gay whisper. "Pass Timothy's chocolates, please!"

"Um, I got a cherry cocktail!" murmured Esther appreciatively, as the box went the rounds.

"It's one time old Timothy did us a good deed," declared Bobby. "We'll have to thank him for our dessert when we go over for the Salsette-Northampton game."

"I'm glad it comes soon after Pageant Week," said Betty. "Our festivities end on Thursday."

"Have you put in your request to go over for the game?" asked Norma eagerly.

Her question was never answered, for a loud knock resounded on the bedroom door and the voice of the corridor teacher was heard, exclaiming:

"Young ladies, open at once!"

Subdued shrieks and mad scamperings!

Norma, Alice, Esther and Anne looked wildly around for some means of escape. The corridor was cut off by the presence of Miss Martha.

"Oh, what will they do? What will they do?" wailed Libbie, wringing her hands and letting fall the box still partially filled with chocolates.

"Hush!" whispered Bobby impatiently. "Something's got to be done."

Again Miss Martha knocked on the door and demanded admittance.

But Norma jerked down a daybed and captured a sheet.

"Hist!" she whispered. "I have a plan. Here, Connie, tie this sheet to the dresser! The balcony's beneath. It's only a six foot drop. We can reach our room if we once get to the balcony!"

No sooner said than done! The window was raised. The conspirators boosted the four run-aways to a table. Silently they jumped out the window and down the sheet to the balcony below.

"Pull in your sheet," giggled Connie. "Now for Miss Martha."

The knock on the door had become a pound!

"Oh, dear," wailed Libbie, "I'm stepping all over Timothy's chocolates!"

Betty unlocked the door.

Miss Martha, clad in a kimono, threw a flashlight on their startled faces.

"Girls! I am surprised!" she exclaimed sternly. "You know these midnight frolics are strictly against the rules." She threw her flashlight over the disordered room, taking in the

empty mugs, the sandwich fragments, the telltale sofa pillows.

"Oh, Miss Martha!" exclaimed Connie, "we just had to frolic after Betty won the tennis match! We were so full of joy. We're sorry if we disturbed you."

"You did not disturb me," replied Miss Martha honestly. "I sleep very soundly. You were reported by three of the students."

"Three of the students!" exclaimed Bobby excitedly. "Then we very well know who. It was Ada Nansen, Nina Trull and Ruth Gladys Royal. And they did it because they're mad about Betty winning the tennis match. You can't deny it, Miss Martha!"

"No, Bobby," answered Miss Martha quietly, "neither can you deny that if you girls had obeyed the rules of Shadyside, this would not have happened. I shall have to decide on a punishment."

The corridor teacher turned toward the door with a half smile on her face when suddenly there was a great noise of rending wood, and the table on which the four girls had made their escape through the window fell in broken fragments to the floor.

"Oh, what made it do that?" shrilled Libbie. "I just leaned against it!"

"Idiot!" whispered Bobby fiercely. "Idiot!"
Miss Martha came quickly across the room.

She gave a startled exclamation as her shoe came down on something soft and sticky. Timothy's chocolates!

She threw the flashlight full upon the broken table; her eyes traveled to the adjoining dresser. An edge of white sheet protruded from behind.

Miss Martha swooped down upon the sheet that Betty had hastily hid. It was torn and inexpressibly soiled.

"This settles it!" she exclaimed grimly. "Shadyside property cannot be destroyed. I shall report this frolic to Mrs. Eustice."

A few moments later, six crestfallen girls crept meekly to bed.

"Miss Martha would have let us off easy," whispered Bobby to Betty, "if that idiot of a Libbie hadn't spoilt everything!"

"Yes," answered Betty, wearily and ironically—"If!"

"Well, anyway, you won the tennis match," comforted Bobby, "and it was a glorious celebration, if we do have to pay for it."

CHAPTER XX

THE PAGEANT ON THE CAMPUS

PAY for their midnight feast the girls did. Mrs. Eustice decreed that the culprits were to stay on the campus for two weeks!

At normal times this would not have meant much, but with the Salsette-Northampton football game only nine days ahead, it was a real tragedy.

Norma, Alice, Esther and Anne, hearing of the plight of their friends, confessed at once to their guilt and shared in the punishment.

"Oh, dear!" wailed Libbie, "Timothy and I have planned for weeks about that game, and now to be cheated out of it!"

"Well, if you hadn't leaned your avoirdupois against the already damaged table, we'd have been there!" declared the blunt Bobby.

Pageant Week arrived at last. Shadyside put on her gala dress. Various committees rushed hither and thither.

Guests began pouring into the massive entrance gates. Books were put away for a time and a perfect orgy of entertainment began.

The day for the Pageant dawned bright and beautiful.

"Glory be!" sang Connie as she donned colonial wig and trousers, "the weather man is our friend! I've been scared to death, afraid he'd drive us off the campus and into the gym. Is my wig on straight, Bettikins?"

"Yes. Is mine?"

Connie, Frances, Libbie and Louise had all assembled in Betty and Bobby's room to dress for the Pageant.

"Yes. You make a perfectly beautiful Martha, Betty." Connie went to the window and looked out. It afforded an excellent view of the campus below.

"Hundreds of people are waiting out there in their little camp chairs," she exulted. "O-oh! I hope everything will go along all right!"

At that moment Edith Ames burst excitedly into the room. She was wringing her hands.

"Girls! Girls! We are ruined! Ada's down with tonsillitis! The people are out there waiting."

Betty's blood seemed to freeze in her veins!

"But she was all right yesterday afternoon!" shrilled Libbie, turning a strained Indian-painted face toward the bearer of the bad news.

"I tell you I know what I'm talking about! Ada took cold yesterday when we practiced on

the campus. She can't speak above a whisper now. I met Miss Morris packing her off to the infirmary. She didn't let them know until a little while ago."

Betty lifted "Martha's" skirts and made a hasty exit. Her heart was pounding with fright. She felt that she would surely suffocate! If Ada failed, it was she who would have to play the part of Miss America!

If! What a train of thoughts the one word brought to her—would always bring!

She met "Priscilla" on the stairs. She recognized the face of Thelma Johnson.

"Oh, Betty!" gasped the gray-clad figure, "isn't this awful? Don't lose your nerve or I'll lose mine!"

Betty wondered vaguely what Thelma meant as she sped on to the gym where every one who had a part was to assemble before the Pageant.

Laura Bennett and Dora Estabrooke, clad in wigs and crinoline, met her at the entrance to the gym.

"Betty! Betty! Mrs. Eustice wants you at once in Dressing Room A! She's up in the air about something."

As Betty entered the little room, Miss Anderson and Mrs. Eustice came forward to meet her.

"Betty," said the principal quietly, her face very pale, "Ada is ill. You will have to take the

part of Miss America. Everything depends on you."

Betty was too frightened for speech. She opened her mouth, but words refused to come.

"Come, Betty," said Miss Anderson quietly, "don't get excited. Frau Zitterman expected this and secretly trained substitutes. Thelma has gone to find her substitute. She is your understudy. Get out of 'Martha' quickly and into the garb of Miss America. Thelma will be down in a moment to dress."

Betty was panic-stricken. Never in her life, she thought, had she been so frightened. "I must not fail! I must not fail!" she kept saying to herself. "I refused the part; Frau Zitterman's prophecies about Ada proved true; it would all be my fault if I failed Shadyside now!"

Something of Betty's panic must have been written on her pale face, for after the white, star-bordered draperies of Miss America had been donned, Mrs. Eustice spoke a few low words to Miss Anderson, who took up the Martha Washington costume and left the room.

Mrs. Eustice handed Betty a gold crown and scepter and said softly:

"You can do this, Betty. You can, you know. I am depending on you."

At this moment Frau Zitterman entered the room. She looked like a nervous wreck.

"Ach, Betty Gordon!" she exclaimed excitedly. "Dis is all your fault! Vat I tell you about Ada? If you get a fright and fail me, I'll vash mine hands ob you! Dat's vat I vill!"

Quick tears stung Betty's eyelids.

"Never mind her," whispered Mrs. Eustice. "She is overwrought. Just remember 'If' and do not lose your head."

Into the young girl's muddled brain leaped the lines:

"If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you."

A measure of self-possession returned, and Betty followed Mrs. Eustice to the campus. She was going down the gymnasium entrance steps when Bobby seized her.

"Oh, Betty, I'm so proud of you! I never dreamed you were understudying Ada! I know you'll do us credit!"

The warm words of faith lightened Betty's heavy spirits.

She was halfway across the campus when some one called. It was Frau Zitterman. She came puffing up.

"Betty! Forgif me!" she panted. "I luf you!" And she took the surprised girl in her arms. "I haf a beast of a temper! I belief in

you. Out mit der voice and show dem vat you can do!"

She was gone before the dazed girl could express her thanks. Mrs. Eustice smiled affectionately.

"How like her!" she remarked.

The school principal raised a white hand. The Shadyside band began to play, and Betty awaited her entrance cue.

The campus was never more beautiful. It was thronged with spectators, some of whom had held their camp chairs for an hour.

Betty looked out over the throng and her heart was stirred as never before by the things for which Shadyside stood.

Over to the east, she caught sight of a hand waved frantically. Bob! And there were dear old Timothy, Tommy and Teddy Tucker, and W. M. Brown.

She waved gayly in return.

"Good luck! I believe in you!" whispered Mrs. Eustice.

The band had ceased playing and the senior pianist struck the chord to Betty's opening song, "Ode to the Dawn."

This was a difficult feat for the pianist, for the pitch had to be lowered for Betty's voice. But the senior was a thorough musician and overcame her difficulties with ease.

The Pageant was a patriotic one, representing the birth of our nation, and the opening song, "Ode to the Dawn," was a very beautiful one, a preparation for what was to follow.

Betty took the singing part, while twelve sprites, dressed in silver and pale green, danced on the soft grass of the campus as Betty sang.

It was difficult of rendition, because at certain intervals the band played a soft accompaniment and to perform the feat well in the open air required a voice of volume as well as sweetness.

Esther Littell was one of the silver-winged fairies who surrounded Betty. As they danced out upon the campus she whispered:

"Good for you, Betty! You can do it!"

"You can do it!" What a magic in the four little words of encouragement when spoken by friends.

Mrs. Eustice! Frau Zitterman! Bobby! Esther! She must not fail them!

She began to sing "Ode to the Dawn" with a clearness and sweetness that carried all before her. The silver-winged fairies danced a graceful accompaniment.

People sat forward in their chairs, straining for a better view. On all sides came the whisper:

"Who is she? What a lovely voice!"

Visitors consulted their programs. Surprised students were exclaiming on all sides.

"It's Betty Gordon! What's wrong with Ada? I never knew Betty could sing like that!"

On went the beautiful song and the fairy dance. At length the band began to play and the fairies swayed softly back and forth to the closing words of the Ode.

"All hail to the dawn, all hail!"

Betty unfurled the American flag and held it aloft while the silver-winged fairies of dawn, poised on one foot and with right arm extended, pointed to the east.

A storm of applause followed and Betty was forced to repeat a part of the Ode.

Next came an Indian dance. While this was going on Betty sang "Coming of the Pilgrim Fathers," and slowly, while the beautiful words floated out on the campus, the "Mayflower" sailed across the lake and the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock.

It was a beautiful and impressive sight.

After much talk and acting between red and white men, Betty sang her "Song of Thanksgiving."

It was enthusiastically received and peace settled down upon Betty's spirit. She knew she was making good.

A number of historic events, closely associated

with the colonies, followed. These culminated in Patrick Henry's famous speech, "Give me liberty or give me death!" and the crowd was thrilled as Betty's clear contralto took up the theme and sang, "I will be free!"

The famous Boston Tea Party was staged; the Declaration of Independence; the ringing of the Liberty Bell; incidents of our war with England, and then the "Father of Our Country" and his wife, Martha (Thelma Johnson), led in a grand march on the campus while Betty sang "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."

Hoops and crinoline! Powdered wigs and knee breeches! War paint and Indian feather! The American Flag! It was a beautiful sight.

"Our fathers' God, to Thee
Sweet land of Liberty,
Of Thee I sing,"

sang Betty.

A storm of applause went up. The Pageant was over.

CHAPTER XXI

ANOTHER GHOST

"My, I'm so excited!" exclaimed Norma Guerin. "I'm so glad Pageant Week ended to-day and can only happen once a year!"

It was the evening of the next day and Betty's chums had collected in her room to discuss the week's events.

"Betty had me up in the air when she sprung that surprise on the campus," declared Bobby. "Frau Zitterman is telling every one you are a wonder. Betty, you could have knocked Bob's eyes off with a stick when you began to sing 'Ode to the Dawn' and he realized it was you. Ada never sang that half as well and I never dreamed you had such a voice!"

Betty smiled at Bobby's extravagant praise.

"At first I was simply frightened to death," she admitted.

"And to think you won the cup for Shadyside to-day!" exulted Connie.

It had been an exciting tennis match for Betty, but so much was happening just then that the match had been somewhat sidetracked, especially

as a sudden but short shower had lessened the attendance. Betty had come out the victor, losing the first set by a 6—3 and taking the second and third by 6—4 and 6—3.

"Shortridge was so sure of herself, too!" laughed Bobby. "It was really funny."

"Anne came very near winning in the rowing contest," boasted Esther. "I was so proud of her. Why, she just a freshman! She'll be sure to represent Shadyside next year with Thelma Johnson out of the race. Anne was just a boat length behind Thelma, as it was!"

"Anne certainly did well!" exclaimed Betty. "Thelma did some good work, too! I'm glad Shadyside beat Shortridge in the rowing contest!"

"I think it's a sin and a shame," fretted Libbie, "for Mrs. Eustice to keep us away from the Salsette-Northampton game when we've worked so hard for Shadyside!"

"We!" mocked Bobby, winking wickedly.

"Bob said yesterday he was going to write Mrs. Eustice a letter begging her to let us off for the football game," announced Betty.

"Oh!" chorused the girls, "do you think she will, Betty?"

"I think she should," complained Libbie. "Betty won the tennis cup for Shadyside and took the part of Miss America at the very last min-

ute. If you ask me, I think they owe her a lot. That's a fact!"

"And it's a fact that I knew the Shadyside rules, too," acknowledged Betty ruefully.

"Anne, where's Esther?" asked Bobby suddenly.

"I don't know. She isn't in our room. I got lonely after study hours, so I brought my new sweater over to show you girls."

"And it's lovely!" exclaimed Bobby enthusiastically.

"Try it on, Anne!" exclaimed Connie. "How little Connie would like to have one like it! Did you ever see such a heavenly blue?"

"Would—would you like to buy it, Connie?" asked Anne quietly, although Betty noticed that a slow flush dyed the freshman's cheek. "It was given to me and I—I can do very well without it."

"Anne! Do you really mean it? I'm crazy about it! How much is it? But surely you—you want it!"

"No," said Anne simply. "I would rather have the money!"

"Oh, joy! I would rather have the sweater!" exclaimed Connie gayly, and ran to get her purse.

She returned with a crisp ten-dollar bill which she dropped into Anne's lap.

"No sooner said than done, the sausage is hung

on the old man's nose," she cried gayly, as she slipped into the sweater.

"Connie!" chorused the girls. "How perfectly lovely! It makes your hair positively beautiful."

"That settles it!" laughed Connie. "I shall wear it all the time if it makes this old red mop of mine beautiful!"

"What a lovely shade of blue," observed soft-voiced Alice Guerin.

"It makes me think of the one Nina gave me several years ago when we spent our Christmas together in Europe," said Anne dreamily. She seemed to be thinking aloud.

"Nina! Nina who?" exclaimed Bobby in sharp surprise.

Anne looked startled and confused.

"What did I say?" she asked nervously.

"You said the sweater reminded you of one Nina gave you when you spent Christmas together in Europe," said Bobby wonderingly. "Did you mean Nina Trull? Have you ever been friends?"

"Yes," admitted Anne. "But please don't say anything about it! We—we are not friends now. I—I never meant to mention it. It just slipped out!"

Anne seemed so embarrassed that Betty tactfully drew the conversation back to the sweater.

Connie was parading pridefully up and down

the room in her new prize, when Esther suddenly burst into the room.

"Ghost! Ghost! Oh, girls, I saw a ghost in the trunk room and it wasn't Nina Trull either, for Mrs. Eustice has had her down in the office for an hour because she lost her temper and stamped on a tennis racquet!"

"Nonsense, Esther!" cried Bobby impatiently. "Talk sense! What did you see?"

"Was it all in white?" demanded Libbie in a sepulchral whisper.

"No—yes—I don't know. I went to the trunk room to get a picture I'd left in my trunk," panted the white-faced Esther, "and something arose out of the shadows, rushed by and hid among a pile of trunks."

"O-oh!" wailed Libbie. "I can't sleep to-night for thinking about it!"

"I'd like to know who's prowling around the trunk room!" exclaimed Betty. "I tell you that night the trunks fell on me, some one was in the room. I heard 'em!"

Anne picked up the ten-dollar bill from her lap and Betty was surprised to see that her hand was trembling.

"I—I must go," faltered the freshman. Her face was ashen.

Betty said nothing to her friends but again her brain began to whirl with conjectures about Ada,

Mr. Nansen, the mysterious stranger and Anne Warner.

Why did Anne seem so eager for money? If she were really poor, how could she afford to travel in Europe? Was she really hard pressed financially or did she want the extra ten dollars for some sinister purpose against Ada?

The idea was absurd! Betty dismissed the thought as far fetched and disloyal.

"And I must go, too!" exclaimed Betty, glancing at the clock. "Excuse me, friends. Frau Zitterman waits."

"You'd better put on your raincoat," Bobby sang out. "It's raining! Began about half an hour ago. It's chilly and disagreeable out!"

There were many exclamations of delight as Betty slipped into her raincoat.

"It's new," announced Bobby. "Her Uncle Dick sent it to her from Denver. She has zippers in the loveliest shade of brown just to match the coat!"

"I'm glad you like it," said Betty. "But I really must go. Where is my permit? Frau Zitterman will be cross."

But the last few days had been too much for the German singer. She was confined to her bed with a nervous headache.

Betty ran fleetly back over the darkened campus. She was thinking about the Salsette-

Northampton game and how disappointed Bob had looked the day of the Pageant when she had informed him she was unable to leave the campus.

Betty was so engrossed with her thoughts that she was frightened when she did look up.

What was that? A man stealing along past bushes, past trees—now he was close to the dormitory. He was near the windows of the trunk room!

A gust of wind and rain sent Betty's hat spinning. When she had recovered it, the man had disappeared.

Was it the mysterious stranger?

"I wonder if Ada is still in the infirmary," she thought uneasily. "What does that man want prowling around here so much?"

Betty's heart was racing and she crept along under the trees until she could get a closer view of the windows of the trunk room.

All was silent.

Suddenly thunder crashed overhead and a silver streak of lightning cut across the darkened sky. Rain descended in torrents!

Betty was forced to flee from the campus and find shelter in the dormitory.

But her mind remained with the mysterious stranger, Ada, Mr. Nansen and Anne Warner. It was a mystery she could not fathom.

That night she was awakened from sleep by a

stifled scream from Bobby. Betty sat bolt upright in bed.

"What is it, Bobby?" she asked. Suddenly the blood froze in her veins.

The shades were raised. A faint light crept in from outside, enabling her to see a white-clothed something floating down the room toward her.

The ghost of the trunk room!

With a blood-curdling shriek, Betty covered her head with the bed clothing.

Bobby had already disappeared under the covers of her bed.

The two girls lay shivering between the sheets.

"Betty! Bobby! What's wrong in here?" demanded the excited voice of Constance Howard as she came running in, followed by Frances Martin.

In the adjoining room, Louise slept peacefully on.

As the lights flared up in Betty's room, Connie and Frances began to laugh. The room echoed with their mirth.

Betty lowered an edge of the bed coverings and peeped cautiously out. Bobby did the same.

Connie and Frances were in the middle of the room rocking back and forth with mirth, while Libbie, clad in a white night dress, stared at them with the vacuous expression of the sleepwalker.

A knock sounded, and Miss Martha, looking

drowsy and cross, stuck her head in at the door.

"What's the matter in here? Another midnight frolic?"

"Oh, no, Miss Martha," laughed Connie, wiping tears of mirth on the edge of her pajama sleeve. "Libbie walked in her sleep and these crazy girls thought she was a ghost! Ha! Ha!"

Miss Martha frowned.

"This idea of a ghost has taken possession of Shadyside. The girls are all in an uproar. It is absurd!" she cried impatiently.

Bobby sat up in bed and fixed her cousin with a scornful eye.

"Close your mouth, Libbie," she ordered sharply. "With it open so wide you look like the dumbest dumbbell I ever saw! I was having a perfectly lovely dream and now you've gone and spoiled it. I'll never know how it was going to end! Put her back to bed where she belongs, Frances!"

The unresisting "ghost" was led back to bed.

Peace settled once more upon the three rooms.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SALSETTE-NORTHAMPTON GAME

"SHADYSIDE! You are the best;
Shadyside! You lead the rest;
You're our beacon and our pride,
Shadyside! Shadyside!"

sang Betty and Bobby as they ran over the campus one day to attend the outdoor basket-ball practice.

The girls were all arrayed in knickers and bloomers and turned eagerly as Betty called out:

"Guess the glorious news! Oh, I'm so happy!"

"Do we get to go to the Salsette-Northampton football game?" shrieked Libbie.

"Yes, Mrs. Eustice received Bob's letter, and also one from Colonel Halsted. She is going to dismiss school to-morrow afternoon! Every one can go—even us! She's relented!"

"Glory be! Whoop-a-la!" sang Connie, turning a handspring on the soft grass.

"Humph," sneered Ada Nansen, giving Betty a hateful look, "you certainly know how to stand in with the powers that be—Frau Zitterman and

now Mrs. Eustice. If I had held a midnight frolic in my room and had been caught, I'd have been confined to the campus all year."

"Yes," chimed in Nina Trull, "and you were so crazy to get the part of Miss America that you learned it on the sly! You're a slick one, Betty Gordon!"

"That's not true!" exclaimed Bobby indignantly. "Betty wouldn't stoop to your methods, Nina Trull. She learned the part because Frau Zitterman insisted on having an understudy for every important rôle. Betty was Ada's sub."

"Well, Betty was second choice, anyway!" said Ada spitefully.

Betty motioned for Bobby to keep silent, but her friend could not be restrained.

"Now you're going to hear something from me, Ada Nansen!" flamed Bobby. "If you had held your spiteful tongue, I never would have told you! But Betty was offered the part first because Frau Zitterman feared you would have an attack of tonsillitis. Betty refused because she wished to spare you humiliation. I think she was too considerate of you, in view of your hateful remarks! You were the one who was second choice, Ada Nansen."

For a moment Ada was speechless with surprise. Then her pale face flushed scarlet with

embarrassment. She threw down the basket ball and stamped her foot.

"There! I'll not practice basket ball with you. I—I hate you!" and she began to cry.

Nina Trull led the weeping girl from the campus.

"Oh, Bobby!" exclaimed Betty, "why did you tell her that? I wanted her never to know!"

"I don't care!" declared Bobby hardily. "She only got what was coming to her!"

The day of the Salsette-Northampton game dawned bright and beautiful. It was a gala day for Salsette and an event long looked forward to by the Shadyside girls.

As Betty and her chums entered the campus of Salsette, Betty exclaimed:

"My, what a mob! Hurry, girls! We are going to be late. I hear the students cheering now!"

Sure enough, as the Shadyside girls entered the immense stadium and took their places in the seats reserved for them, the referee blew his whistle.

The captains of the two teams came to the center of the field, and Esther, giving Betty a violent dig in the ribs, demanded in a whisper:

"What are they doing now?"

Bobby gave a dismal groan but Betty answered patiently.

"They flip a coin, Esther, to decide which goal they are to defend."

"And what do all those white lines mean? I've been told, but I forget!"

"The field is laid off with white lines every five yards so the gains can be marked better," answered Betty, amused that Esther knew so little about football. "The two poles and cross bars at either end are the goals."

"Don't make a pest out of yourself, Esther!" exclaimed Bobby impatiently.

"I see Bob!" cried Betty suddenly. "Doesn't he look large in his old gold and black togs? Oh, Bobby, it's his first game as a regular! He's playing halfback. I do hope Salsette wins! Bob so much wants to make good, especially as Jerry Crosley feels the way he does toward him."

"That Jerry Crosley is the limit!" exclaimed Bobby indignantly. "Do you know, Betty, he told Tommy Tucker that it was just spite work, or he would be playing in Bob's place to-day? Such conceit! He said every one knew he was a better man than Bob."

"The idea! What did Tommy say?"

"He said, 'I'm one person who doesn't know it!'" and Bobby giggled delightedly.

"Good for Tommy! Oh, look! The coin has been flipped!" exclaimed Connie.

Betty looked quickly back to the field where

the Salsette boys were defending the south goal and the white and red, the north.

"Good! Our boys won the kick off!" she exclaimed as the ball was raised from the center of the field by a vigorous kick.

"Look how fast our ends run!" exclaimed Connie excitedly. "They downed that white and red man in his tracks, almost!"

Cheers and yells from Salsette students!

Now began a vigorous fight on line drives. The white and red went steadily down the field but were stopped on the twenty-yard line.

Salsette returned the compliment by driving the ball back to Northampton's twenty-yard line. When the whistle blew ending the first quarter neither side had scored.

The teams seemed to be evenly matched and the first quarter showed that it was going to be a hard-fought game.

Bob made some fine gains through the line and around end, but apparently this was true of every one who carried the ball.

"Look, they are again taking their places!" cried Libbie excitedly. "Oh, that big white and red man is kicking off!"

The ball soared down the field. But this time from the toe of the white and red man. Betty's heart stood still as she saw Bob pounce upon the ball, dodge, and run fleetly toward the goal.

"Whoop-ee! Look at that scudder run!" exclaimed a football enthusiast who sat directly in front of Betty.

Salsette arose as one body and shrieked encouragement, but a shiver went down Betty's spine as she saw the Northampton big halfback bearing down upon Bob.

How close the goal was! Could Bob make it?

A groan went up from Salsette, followed by wild cheering and yells from Northampton, for the big Northampton halfback tackled Bob after he had run full sixty yards.

"Now what will they do?" cried Betty excitedly. "Look! One, two, three, downs! Salsette is driving their men right through the lines for gains every time!"

"Look at that trick pass Teddy made!" yelled Connie. "It worked! Who has the ball now?"

"It's Tommy! It's Tommy," shrieked Bobby, jumping to her feet and waving wildly. "Run, Tommy, run!"

Salsette fans jumped to their feet and cheered wildly. Bedlam broke loose!

Tommy's slender, old gold and black figure had succeeded in throwing off his assailants and flew down the field for a touchdown.

"He made it! He made it!" cried Bobby, and embraced her chum.

Wild shrieks and hoarse cheers arose from the

stadium! Betty flushed guiltily as she secretly wished the victor had been Bob.

"Spaghetti! Confetti!
Hurrah for Salsette!"

yelled the man in front of Betty, and he gayly drenched the two girls with confetti.

Laughingly, Betty wiped the small bits of colored paper from her eyes and looked toward the gridiron.

"Now, if we can only kick goal, we'll be 7 to 0!" she exclaimed.

"Oh! He didn't do it!" wailed Bobby, and sank into her seat.

"I wish they had given Bob the chance," thought Betty. "I guess they think Bob can't kick after those wild ones he made while subbing the first of the season. They don't realize how hard he has been practicing those kicks lately, or how good he really is!"

"Who's that tall guy on the Salsette team?" demanded the football enthusiast of Betty. "He's a good one, he is!"

Betty smiled at the man's praise. "That's Slim Gregory," she answered. "He's one of Salsette's best men."

"Look, the white and red are kicking off again," shouted Libbie.

This time the ball went to Tommy instead of

Bob and Tommy was downed almost in his tracks by the white and red men.

The Salsette boys were held for downs.

"Look at that white and red man trying a trick pass!" yelled the tall man in front of Betty. "Ah, good! That little Northampton fellow fumbled the ball! Ah! That Slim Gregory's body is curling around the ball like a snake! Good boy, Slim!"

"Why, our boys are beating Slim Gregory on the back!" exclaimed Esther. "He must have made a great mistake!"

"Great mistake, nothing!" exclaimed Bobby. "Perhaps he's saved the game! Oh, Tommy has the ball! There! Oh, good! He's put it out of danger!"

The red and white team played doggedly on, hitting the Salsette lines hard and making good gains.

When the referee blew his whistle, the game was half over with Salsette in the lead.

CHAPTER XXIII

BOB PLAYS FOOTBALL

BOBBY embraced Betty joyously as Salsette began madly cheering for their team.

"My heart is pounding like a hammer," shouted Bobby. "Do you think we'll live through this?"

"I shall die happy if Salsette only wins," shrieked Betty, as the stadium rang out the senseless ditty:

"Spaghetti! Confetti!
Hurrah for Salsette!"

"Look out for the next quarter," warned Bobby. "We mustn't be too sure!"

After a time of wild yelling and cheering for their respective teams and excited talk, the whistle sounded.

"Oh, look!" exclaimed Betty. "Bob is going to kick off this time!"

Sure enough! Bob dashed down the field to kick the ball, but caught his toe on something and fell. The ball went a scarce ten yards down the field.

It was picked up by the white and red's little quarterback. Dodging and jumping, away went the quarterback down the field to the ten-yard line.

Wild cheers arose from the Northampton fans as their little quarterback called his tackle back, and his halfback over, and sent the fullback dashing through the Salsette line for Northampton's first touchdown.

"Oh, he's kicked goal!" groaned Betty a few seconds later. "The score is 7 to 6 in favor of Northampton!"

Northampton sent up a deafening cheer!

"Those people act as if they're crazy!" said Alice Guerin in disgust.

Bobby Littell winked wickedly at Betty, then exclaimed:

"Look, Betty! Tommy is going to kick off this time! Fine!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Betty. "Our boys are not holding the line! One, two, three plays and still Northampton gains!"

Bobby seized Betty by the arm.

"But look! Now they lose! Second play and they don't gain much! Third play and the ball is ours!"

"Tommy has the ball!" shrieked Connie. "Oh, dear! Now Northampton has it!"

But Northampton was held for downs which made Salsette look good for a touchdown.

"Oh, dear, one of our boys is hurt!" exclaimed Betty, straining for a better view of the gridiron. They're carrying him off the field. I hope it's not Bob!"

"It's Blacky Morris! Salsette's quarterback!" The news came flying down the line towards Betty. "He has a sprained ankle!"

Betty knew what that meant.

"Surely they will not put Jerry Crosley in such an important position," she thought. "I know he'll do everything he can to get Bob in bad."

But Jerry Crosley it was! She recognized him by his flaming red hair and stalwart form as he strode out upon the field. He began to call signals.

"He does call them loud and distinctly," thought the fair-minded Betty.

The whistle sounded. It was the end of the third quarter and the game stood in Northampton's favor.

"I feel sorry for Bob, the way he made that bum kick off," thought Betty. "I know it will worry him. Every one will think he can't kick!"

Northampton was cheering and yelling like mad. They were sure of victory. Salsette gave a half-hearted yell.

Again the rival teams took up their positions. Northampton kicked off.

"O-oh!" groaned Bobby. "Look at their end man down Tommy before he had scarcely taken a step."

Jerry Crosley was again calling signals.

"Oh, look!" cried Betty. "Jerry tried one of those trick plays of his and was caught in the act! Now he is trying to make up the loss by using Bob through the line!"

But the Salsette boys were not able to make enough gain in the next two plays and the ball went to Northampton on the thirty-yard line.

"Oh, good!" cried Bobby. "Tommy has stopped them again, and Jerry has the ball on a fumble!"

"He's trying that trick play again!" yelled the man in front of Betty. "Watch out! Watch out!"

Jerry succeeded in gaining about two yards for Salsette, but again he drove Bob against the line. It was like a brick wall!

Suddenly Betty began to boil with indignation as Jerry's plan became clear to her.

He intended to wear Bob out! To show Bob in a bad light if possible!

She could hear Jerry calling the numbers and knew it was a code, telling the Salsette boys who

was to carry the ball and where; also if the play was a real or trick play.

Betty was glad to see that Bob made slight gains in spite of Northampton's stubborn resistance.

Again Jerry Crosley used Bob! Salsette lost the ball on the third down.

"Ah, that red-headed mutt! Why don't he quit picking on that halfback? He's wearing him out!" growled the man in front of Betty.

Now the white and red team tried a drop kick, but one of the Salsette boys slipped through and blocked it, giving Slim Gregory a chance to get his long body wrapped around the ball which was on the forty-yard line.

"What is Jerry up to now?" cried Bobby excitedly.

Betty looked. Her heart stood still, then beat with terrifying force against her ribs.

"Look at the formation!" shrieked Bobby, almost crazy with anxiety. "I believe Jerry has called Bob to try a drop kick!"

"And from the forty-yard line! Of all things!" raved Betty. "Jerry's just trying to disgrace Bob!" Tears streamed down Betty's cheeks unheeded. She was unconscious of them.

"Disgrace? Nothing!" yelled the tall man who sat in front of Betty. "Watch him! Watch the ball!"

The ball seemed to shoot like a bullet from Bob's toe, soaring between the posts and over the bar for a drop kick from the forty-yard line.

"My gosh, that was a pretty one!" yelled the tall stranger, and he crushed his hat until it looked like a ribbon in his hand.

"Spaghetti! Confetti!
Hurrah for Salsette!"

Shrill yells from the Salsette fans who went wild with joy.

"Henderson! Henderson!
Who's all right?
Henderson!"

went up the cry. It rose in volume and thundered round the stadium.

"I think I shall die of joy!" gasped Betty. Pride consumed her.

Bob's unusual drop kick placed the score 9 to 7 in favor of Salsette.

"Now, you'll see some stiff playing, Miss!" exulted the tall man, turning to Betty. "Hurrah! Hurrah for Salsette!" he yelled. Again the dilapidated hat went up in the air.

The white and red men kicked off again, but Tommy returned the ball to the center of the field and the Salsette boys were held for downs.

Northampton succeeded in making their gains, but the Salsette boys held them on the last down, just as the whistle blew.

The game was over!

For the first time in years, Salsette had won over Northampton.

The stadium rang with the wild cheers for Salsette. Utter strangers embraced!

The tall man arose stiffly and with a sheepish grin planted his remnant of a hat upon his head. He looked inexpressibly comic.

"I shall have to get a new hat," he muttered, "but it's well worth the price!"

Bobby began to giggle softly.

Salsette students and fans hurried down into the field where they performed a wild, serpentine dance.

Betty and her chums vainly endeavored to get to the football heroes. But the crowd had gone quite mad. It was impossible to break through the mass of dancing people who crowded the field.

For a few moments Betty had a vision of Bob borne aloft on the shoulders of his team! The red head of Jerry Crosley was conspicuous by its absence.

"I'll bet this day's an unlucky one for Jerry!" flamed Bobby. "His schemes didn't work, but they were too plain to escape punishment."

"It seemed impossible that Bob could kick so far!" exclaimed Betty with pride.

It was half an hour later that Bob, Timothy and Tommy and Teddy Tucker were able to get with Betty and her friends.

As the old gold and black football heroes came dashing up, all eyes turned toward them.

Betty hugged Bob in plain view of thousands of spectators.

"I don't care!" she laughed. "Oh, Bob, I'm so proud of you!"

Bob looked happily down into Betty's brown eyes.

"Now you know how I felt when you sang the part of Miss America!" he teased.

Tommy, Teddy and Timothy crowded around, each receiving their measure of praise. Every one spoke at once. Excitement reigned.

At last they were able to escape to Alpine's where a band furnished music and cake and ice cream were served.

Betty and Bob were fortunate enough to find a little, screened-in alcove. The Salsette colors were everywhere.

"Our coach has sure punished Jerry Crosley," whispered Bob. "Jerry's to play no more this year."

"He shouldn't play if he thinks of personal spite before his team!" declared Betty hotly.

Bob chuckled. "Well, he did play for his team, you know, after all."

"Yes, but he didn't intend to. You fooled him. Oh, Bob! how could you kick so far?"

Bob's face sobered. "Well, you know I've been practicing kicks for weeks, Betty. But when Jerry forced me to kick from the forty-yard line, I was panic-stricken. I knew he wished to disgrace me before the crowd. But, Betty, it was the funniest thing! I thought of Kipling's 'If' that Uncle Dick gave me and I grew as cool as a cucumber."

Betty nodded. "I know. I was frightened half out of my wits when I had to take Ada's place in the Pageant. Those verses were the only thing that gave me the nerve!"

For a long time these two young people, drawn so closely together by the silver cord of destiny, conversed in low tones.

Betty told Bob all her troubles. The trunk-room ghost, her fears for Ada, the mysterious man, and Anne Warner's queer behavior.

Bob shook his head. "It's sure a mystery," he sighed.

CHAPTER XXIV

BETTY LAYS THE GHOST

LATE that afternoon the girls returned to Shadyside.

"I feel like the tag end of a misspent life," sighed Betty, sinking into a chair. "Nevertheless, this is certainly the end of a perfect day. If Uncle Dick had only been there to-day!"

"But he will spend the Christmas holidays with us at Fairfields," returned Bobby quickly. "It will not be many weeks until Christmas."

"Oh!" groaned Libbie, "don't mention the end of the term! I'm going to flunk in math! I know I shall!"

"I'll be glad to help you if you'll study, Libbie," offered Betty generously.

"That's it! She won't do it!" said the blunt Bobby.

One Saturday, a short time after the Salsette-Northampton game, Betty and her chums were out on the campus.

The first deep snow had fallen and they were having a merry time.

The girls had chosen sides, with Betty and

Bobby as leaders, and were having a good-natured fight with soft snowballs.

It was a pretty sight. The beautiful, glistening snow; the rosy-cheeked, merry-hearted girls; the whitened campus.

The girls were shrieking with laughter when suddenly a hard, compact snowball came hurtling through space and caught Betty upon the temple with terrific force.

"Oh!"

The cry was one of extreme pain.

Before the startled eyes of her friends, Betty toppled over and sank from sight in a big snow-drift.

"Oh!" shrieked Bobby, "who threw that ball? Get her out! Get her out!"

Eighteen hands went desperately to work. Betty was dragged out. She was gasping for breath.

"Are you all right?" demanded Bobby anxiously, shaking the snow from her friend.

Betty put her hands to her head in a dazed fashion.

"Who threw that ball?" demanded Norma Guerin indignantly. "It must have been as hard as a brickbat!"

A cautious head protruded around the wall of the gymnasium. Another followed.

"Ada Nansen and Nina Trull," cried Connie angrily. "Rush them, girls!"

Away flew the two figures with Betty's friends in hot pursuit.

Libbie and Louise stayed with Betty, who was almost unable to move, so hard had been the blow upon her temple.

After a few moments, Betty laughed shakily. "I'm all right now, girls! Let's go up to our rooms. It's getting dusk."

"I wish—if you feel well enough—you would go to the trunk room with Libbie and me first," ventured Louise. "We left a hammer in our trunk and I want to hang a picture. I—I don't like the idea of going into that trunk room much!"

"I—I guess I'll run on," said Libbie hastily, and sped away over the snow-covered campus.

Quiet Louise looked up at Betty and smiled whimsically.

"You may run away, too, if you wish."

Betty laughed. "I guess I'll see you through."

Truth to tell, she was not at all eager to go to the trunk room, but not for worlds would she have admitted the fact to Louise.

The two girls found their way to the trunk room and quietly switched on the light.

Quiet reigned.

"I know just where my trunk is," said Louise

nervously, looking back over her shoulder. "It's over here, Betty. Nothing is piled on it, thank goodness. And here's the hammer!"

Suddenly a sneeze sounded through the quiet room and the lights went out!

"Oh!" screamed Louise. "Betty! Where are you?"

"Hush!" whispered Betty.

Her hand sought that of Louise. The two girls stood in tense silence. Something rushed past them. The door was slammed violently; then silence!

"Oh, let's get out of here!" panted Louise.

The two girls rushed out into the lighted hall. Nothing was in sight.

"The ghost of the trunk room!" gasped Louise.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Betty. "There is no such thing!" But she was trembling with fright.

In the upper corridor the two girls interrupted a heated quarrel between Ada, Nina, and Betty's friends.

Louise turned to her sister.

"Oh, Bobby, something was in the basement," she panted. "Betty and I heard it!"

"The ghost of the trunk room!" shrieked Libbie. "You don't catch me in that place after dark!"

"There's nothing in the trunk room!" declared

Ada Nansen angrily. "You and Betty Gordon are just cowards, that's all."

Betty's friends had succeeded in overtaking Ada and Nina just as they reached the upper corridor. The two girls had hoped to make their escape unnoticed, and failure to do so had not improved their temper.

"Is that so!" remarked Bobby sarcastically. "But to hide behind the gym and knock a person down with an icy snowball is a very courageous thing to do, isn't it?"

"Young ladies! Young ladies! Can it be that you are quarreling?" It was the voice of Miss Martha Nevins.

The girls scampered to their rooms.

Betty shed her wet clothing and was soon snug and warm again.

"I'd give a good deal to know who that is prowling around in the basement and what he wants!" she cried.

"Let's set a watch," suggested Bobby.

"The very thing! We'll watch in sets of three."

But nothing came of the "watch." The days sped by and "the ghost" had apparently made up its mind to visit them no more.

Betty became active in indoor basket ball games and at last succeeded in getting on the team as a regular.

When the study hours were over and the holiday season approached Shadyside girls began to work madly on Christmas gifts.

"Ada Nansen is making the loveliest boudoir frock I ever saw!" exclaimed Frances Martin one evening when the girls had assembled in Betty's room. "It is pale pink *crêpe de chine*, embroidered in pink and blue."

"Who's she making it for?" inquired Connie, with interest.

Frances laughed. "For herself, of course. Catch Ada spending hours of work on any one else! She does a lot of embroidery. It is exquisite work."

"I hope Anne will like this sports dress," said Esther, looking up from her lap in which lay a pile of blue flannel. "She cried all last night. She's afraid she can't come back next term!"

Needles were suspended in air.

"But why?" demanded a chorus of girlish voices.

"She—she says she can't afford it!"

"That's a shame!" exclaimed Betty. "I'm going to tell Uncle Dick. He'd be glad to help her, I know."

"Oh, don't suggest such a thing! She's as proud as Lucifer! And, girls"—Esther's voice sank to a whisper—"she had wealth at one time,

I'm sure of it! She's let the cat out of the bag more than once!"

Anne Warner was a riddle to Betty Gordon. An enigma! A mystery!

The weather turned steadily colder as time for the holidays approached. The campus was covered with snow and sleet. The thermometer dropped steadily.

Betty continued her voice lessons with Frau Zitterman, and one evening after a particularly pleasant hour spent with the German singer, she sped back over the snow-covered campus.

"If this weather keeps up we'll have ice on the lake for skating," thought Betty and drew her fur closer around her shoulders to keep out the bitter cold.

Suddenly she became aware of a tall figure flitting over the campus toward the dormitory.

The mysterious stranger again!

Silently, with fast beating heart, Betty followed the skulking figure from tree to tree.

Now he made a dash for the intervening space between trees and dormitories, paused a moment at the basement windows of the dormitory; raised one and disappeared from view in the darkened trunk room.

"I'll find out what he's up to or know the reason why!" panted Betty grimly, as she sped over the snowy campus and up to her room.

Her friends were all there. They were "cramming for exams."

Betty quickly told them the news.

"Tell Mrs. Eustice!" panted Libbie. "I'll not go a step out of this room. Help! Burglars! Thieves!"

But the other girls were half way down to the office of Mrs. Eustice. They were not the kind of girls who wished to miss an adventure.

In five minutes the capable principal had organized her forces.

A guard was set outside. A crowd of excited girls collected, demanding what was wrong. Ada Nansen, Nina Trull, Ruth Gladys Royal and Violet Canby were among the latter.

"Oh," sneered Ada, "it's just Betty Gordon trying to get up some excitement."

Information was whispered around, and with Dave, the grizzled janitor, heading the procession, teachers and pupils filed quietly into the basement.

The trunk room was in darkness.

Dave crept stealthily in and switched on the light. Betty was close behind.

She gave a startled scream, for she looked straight into the eyes of the mysterious stranger.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED

SHRILL shrieks came from the girls of Shady side!

Evidently the mysterious stranger thought it was time he was making his exit, for, jumping upon a pile of trunks, he started to leave by the window.

"He's Anne Warner's stepfather!" shouted the voice of Nina Trull. "Catch him! Catch him! He's a common thief!"

Betty Gordon noticed that his hands were filled with official looking documents. He thrust them into his pocket.

"Head him off! Catch him!" shouted the girls, and Betty grabbed at the man's trouser leg and held on for dear life until Dave could get to her.

"Hold on! What you doing here?" growled big Dave, laying a restraining hand upon the struggling man.

"I'm getting what belongs to me," panted the mysterious man. "I'm no thief!"

"Kindly come to the office," said the quiet voice

of Mrs. Eustice. "I must talk this over with you."

"And no monkey tricks!" growled Dave, "or I'll bat ye one, partner!"

The stranger drew himself up with great dignity and bowed to the principal.

"I feel an explanation is due you," he said. "I shall be glad to explain to you, Mrs. Eustice."

"Oh, Mrs. Eustice!" exclaimed Ada Nansen, "he cheated my father out of a lot of money and Nina's father, too! I wouldn't trust him an inch. He's Anne Warner's stepfather!"

Betty scanned the sea of faces for Anne. She was not there.

"Go quickly to your rooms, girls," ordered Mrs. Eustice. "Thank you for your help. I will attend to this matter at once in my office."

Dave, the mysterious stranger, Mrs. Eustice, Miss Anderson, and Miss Morris filed slowly out, followed by the wondering girls. Conjectures were rife!

Next day the school buzzed with the news. Anne Warner's stepfather had been caught in the basement of the trunk room. He was a common thief! He had stolen money both from Mr. Nansen and Mr. Trull. Ada and Nina said so!

It was whispered around that Anne had been seen in the vicinity of the trunk room many times. Ah, of course! She was helping him plan a rob-

bery! The man had been caught before the plans matured. The trunk-room ghost had turned into a desperado!

Anne was avoided or openly insulted, according to the nature of the girl. Her eyes began to take on the look of the hunted, but she kept silent, offering no word of explanation.

During the next week Esther Littell waged many a battle in behalf of her friend. For Esther believed in Anne with a faith that seemed unshakable.

"I don't care if her father is a common thief," declared Esther, with tears in her honest eyes. "Anne is everything that's fine!"

Mrs. Eustice, strange to say, offered no word of explanation, although Dave and the faculty had been closeted for hours with the mysterious stranger.

Days went by. Examinations were held. The holidays were close at hand.

Athletics and the many hours Betty had spent on the campus had not interfered with her studies. To her great delight, her name was on the honor roll for excellent work.

Colder and colder grew the weather. The lake froze over and the juniors began frantic preparations for a skating party before the term closed.

"A moonlight night, a skating party, a hurdy-

gurdy, and colored lanterns!" exclaimed Betty, as the plans progressed. "Who would want more fun?"

"Hot cocoa! Sandwiches! Little cakes!" crowed Libbie blissfully. "Yum-yum! That sounds good!"

"Connie makes such delicious cocoa! She's at the head of the eats committee," remarked Bobby. "We'll serve it in the basement dining room."

"I am glad we can each have a guest," said Louise quietly. "I asked Esther, but Betty had beaten me to it. Esther begged me to ask Anne Warner."

"Did you?" Bobby wanted to know.

"Yes, I did."

"I am glad," said Betty quietly. "I do not begin to understand Anne Warner, but I like her immensely. I do not think we should slight her, even if her father is a thief."

"Ada and Nina ignore her entirely," said Bobby indignantly. "How can Anne help what her stepfather does?"

"I am afraid no one will skate with her," said Louise, lowering her voice. "And you know that much of the time we shall all be busy on the different committees."

The girls looked worried. But their worry was in vain. Just a few hours before the skating

party, the evening papers came out with such astounding news that Shadyside buzzed with it.

The girl who Louise feared would go unnoticed was the most popular girl on the lake. Anne Warner did not lack for partners.

It was a perfect night. The snow-covered campus glowed with bright Chinese lanterns. The hurdy-gurdy played by a picturesque Italian couple added much to the magic enchantment of the scene.

Snow encircled the lake in a great, glistening, white bank. How smooth the ice was as the girls "cracked the whip" or waltzed over the ice to the tune the Italians were grinding out!

Ada Nansen and Nina Trull were conspicuous for their absence, for the evening paper had bowed their haughty heads in disgrace and elevated Anne Warner to unexpected heights.

The evening paper had brought the startling news that Mr. Nansen and Mr. Trull had deliberately cheated the mysterious Mr. Mombrey, Anne Warner's stepfather, out of a large fortune.

The story was told in detail. How Mr. Nansen, assisted by Mr. Trull, had withheld important papers from Mr. Mombrey so that the latter could not prove his claim; how Mr. Mombrey had vowed to have his just dues and had sought to find the papers.

In lurid headlines, the story was told how Mr.

Mombrey had secretly searched the offices of both men to no avail. Finally in the secret drawer of Mr. Nansen's office desk, Mr. Mombrey had come upon this note. "Mombrey case—L—A's trunk."

The latter had come to believe that the letters meant "lining—Ada's trunk"; that Mr. Nansen had placed the papers there without Ada's knowledge, thinking they would be safe from detection.

Mr. Mombrey had traced the trunk to Shady-side. He had depended on his stepdaughter to get the papers for him, but she could not move the heavy trunks which were piled upon it, and feared to ask the janitor to do so because they might be watched and foiled in their purpose to get possession of the papers secretly.

Many different times Mombrey made unsuccessful attempts to find Ada's trunk. Even after he did so, he could not find where the papers were until the night he was detected in the trunk room.

Of course, Mr. Mombrey wished Mrs. Eustice to keep silence until he could consult a lawyer. He had done so. Justice was meted out. Mr. Mombrey claimed his fortune. Both Mr. Nansen and Mr. Trull were out on bond, awaiting trial for embezzlement.

"Ada and Nina both thought Anne's father had tricked them in business! They believed

what their fathers told them. Isn't it awful?" whispered the Shadyside girls.

Down in the basement dining room the discussion went on, as girls gathered to drink the delicious cocoa Connie had prepared.

"These are the spiffiest sandwiches I ever put in my mouth!" exclaimed Bobbly. "Have another one, Anne."

Anne looked very happy. Her financial worries were over. It was nice to be sought out by all the girls. But her unpleasant experiences had taught her one thing—the value of Esther Littell's friendship.

"You will always be first with me!" whispered Anne to her devoted friend.

Esther hugged her ecstatically.

"There's no one in the world like you, Anne Warner!" she declared.

After the refreshments the juniors and their guests sped happily back over the campus for another hour on the ice.

Again the smiling Italians ground out the rollicking strains on the hurdy-gurdy. The girls flew over the ice. The Chinese lanterns swayed in the night air.

The moon shed a pure, cold light over the glistening campus—the campus where Betty Gordon had fought many a battle and won.

"It's a lovely ending for you, Anne," mur-

mured Betty. "The end of the trunk-room mystery."

Joining hands on the ice, the two girls looked out over the glistening campus and sang happily as the hurdy-gurdy ground out the tune:

"Shadyside! You are the best!
Shadyside! You lead the rest!
You're our beacon and our pride,
Shadyside! Shadyside!"

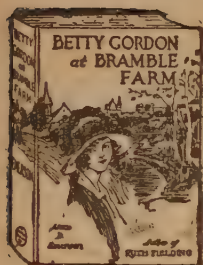
THE END

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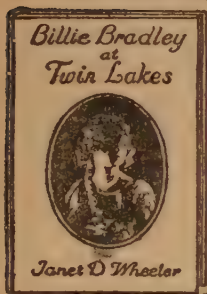
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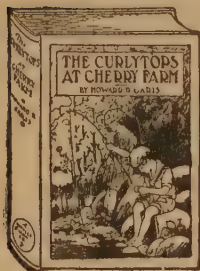
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